

Commentary

Volume Sixty-seven, Number Six, June 1979

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Liberation Theology and the Pope

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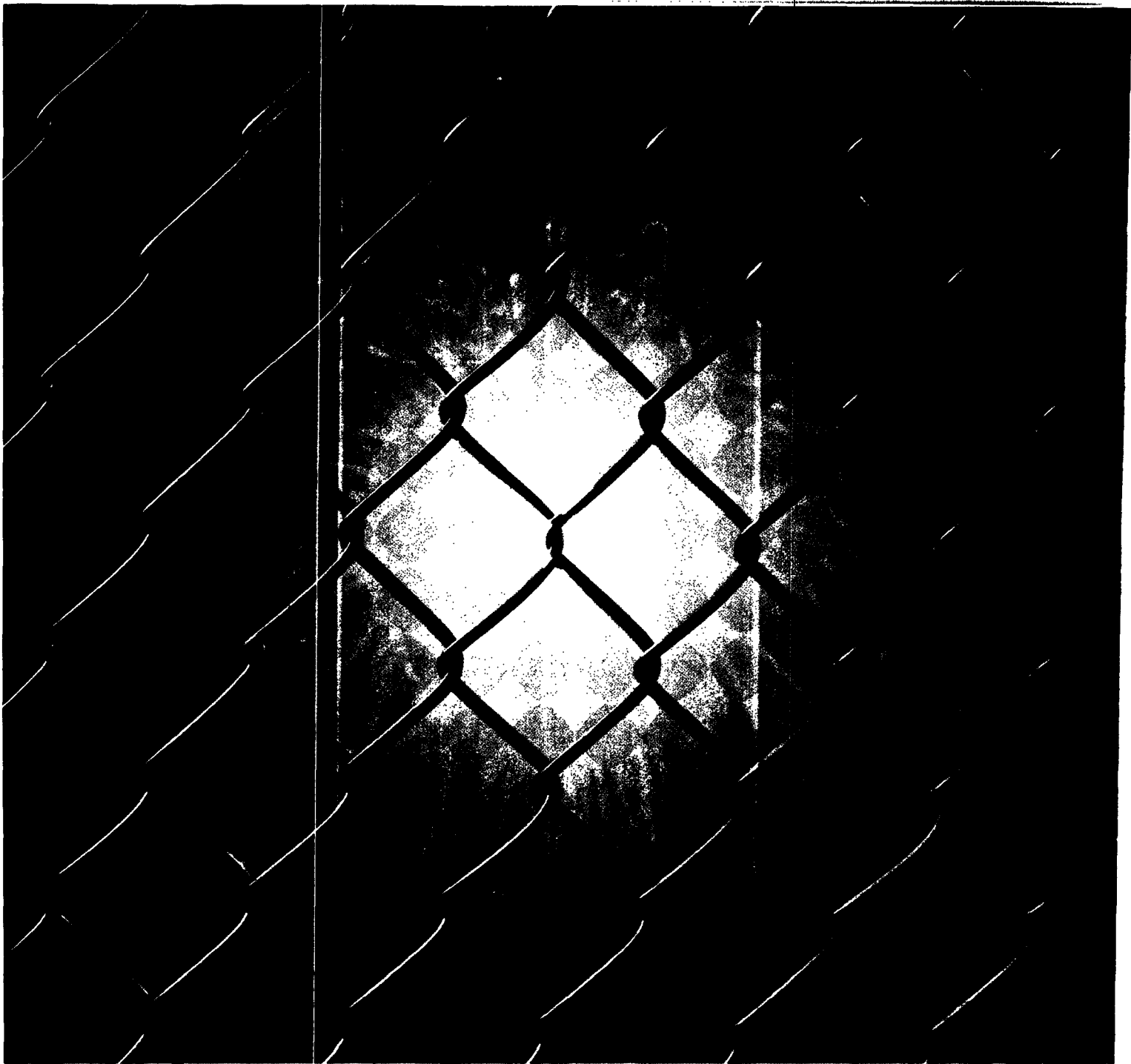
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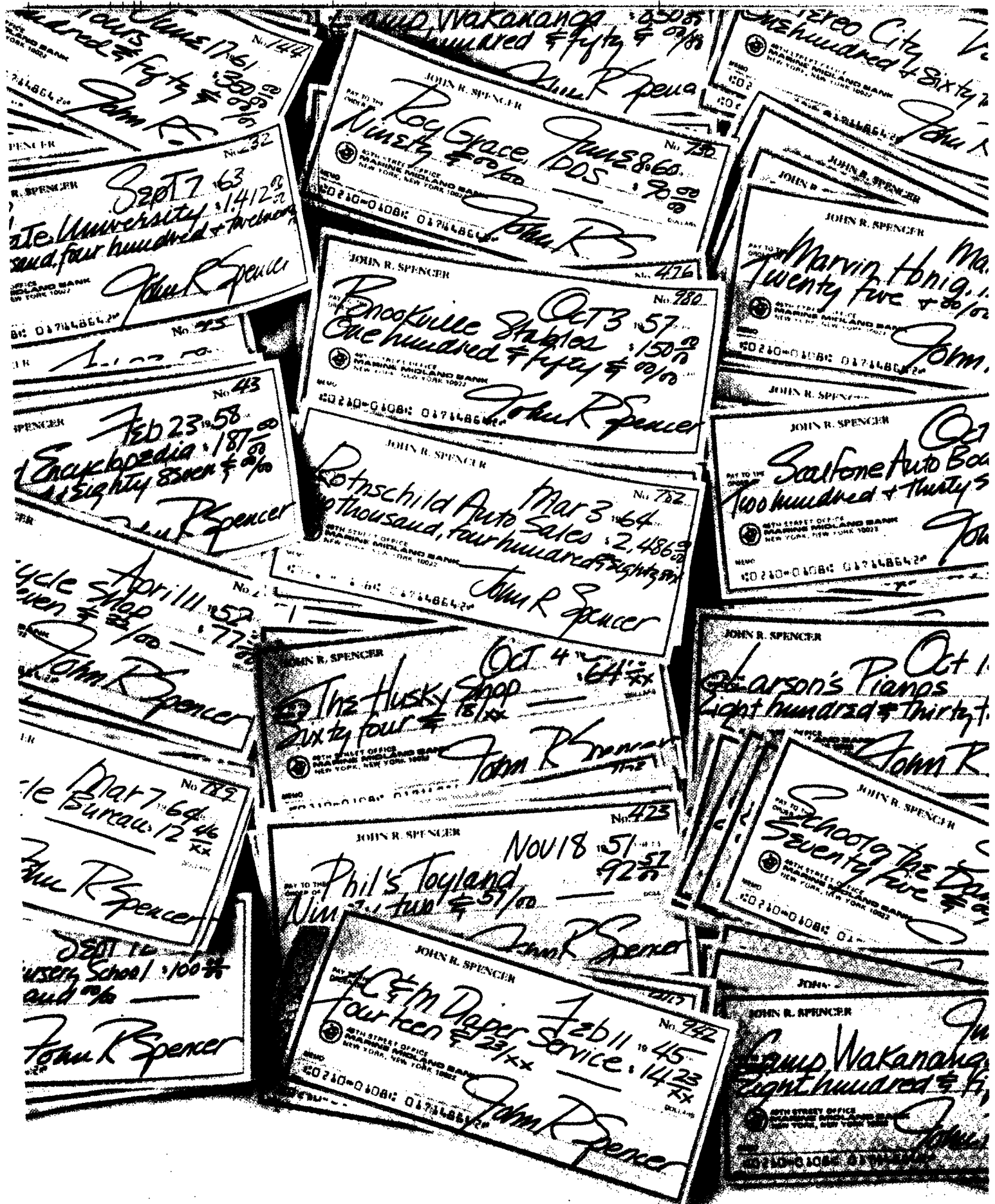
Commentary

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Letters from Readers

SALT II

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

... A few years ago, when COMMENTARY published articles by Daniel P. Moynihan and others suggesting that we respond openly and seriously to those countries which incited opposition to us by propagating lies about us, ... a rush of criticism came from certain organs of the media ... which condemned such thinking as only so much cold-war rhetoric.

It is now sadly ironic that in February, the month Eugene V. Rostow's article, "The Case Against SALT II," appeared—as the U.S. was being chased out of Iran, as Khomeini was embracing Arafat, as the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan was cold-bloodedly murdered, as China and Vietnam went to war, and as Qatar, Abu Dhabi, and Libya raised their oil prices to intolerable levels—these same critics began to wonder, in panic-stricken tones, why the U.S. could not do anything about any of this. Indeed, an editorial in the New York Post of February 20 seemed to endorse the ideas the paper had previously condemned: "We have many weapons, many responses at our disposal in the fight against the excesses of the Khomeinis, the Arafats, and the OPEC blackmailers. All we need is the will."

In every single one of the events mentioned the Soviet Union was in some way involved. News dispatches coming out of Iran told of Soviet-authored radio broadcasts which stirred the Iranians against us. ... The words were so heated and inflammatory, so passionately anti-American, and so palpably false, that any rational person who took the time to read what was being said about us would find it impossible to believe that we were currently involved in treaty negotiations with the Soviet Union. ...

The probable answer is that the SALT treaty is not as important to the Soviets as it is to us, or more to the point, as it is to Jimmy Carter. As Mr. Rostow points out, the essential problem with SALT II is the politically coercive power it gives to the Soviets. Actually, some inkling of this is already evident in the talks themselves, for it is common knowledge that President Carter wants this treaty as an accomplishment he can point to in his bid for reelection. ...

It was, therefore, important that Mr. Rostow's analysis appeared when it did, for it proved that SALT II is not the key to peace. If the Soviets are interested in détente, let them prove their intentions by halting the enormous arms build-up they are presently undertaking, by ending their support of such racists as Qaddafi and Arafat, ... and by terminating their attempts to incite others against us. If these conditions are not met, then we should get up and leave the table, not necessarily with the understanding that we will never return, but with the understanding that we do not take lightly what is presently being pulled on us, and until it stops, the American people see no reason to pretend that these are peaceful times.

JOHN J. COX

Flushing, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

... Strategic nuclear weapons must be the most inflexible tools of war since the use of metal body armor in the Middle Ages. The very enormity of their destructive power has made them useless in any international crisis to date. Our vast nuclear superiority did not prevent Berlin, Korea, the Cuban missile crisis, or Vietnam from happening. Nor did it end any of them. Rather, it was resolute use of conventional weapons by one side or the other which brought each of these crises to a conclusion.

It follows, then, that our strategic nuclear forces—and those of the other side—cannot deter much of anything except the final "Big Bang." This conclusion assumes that the U.S. and the Soviet Union are in a situation of parity. If this is so, then the SALT II treaty can be argued for without linkage to anything else.

We can verify Soviet compliance with the terms of SALT II, at least for five years or so. I do not possess the knowledge to make an independent judgment, but I rely instead on Congressman Les Aspin's persuasive article about this country's ability to monitor the activities of the other side.

Our allies had better not count on the "nuclear umbrella" for their security, if indeed they ever did. Let us suppose that the Soviet Union has overrun Western Europe, including the British Isles, by

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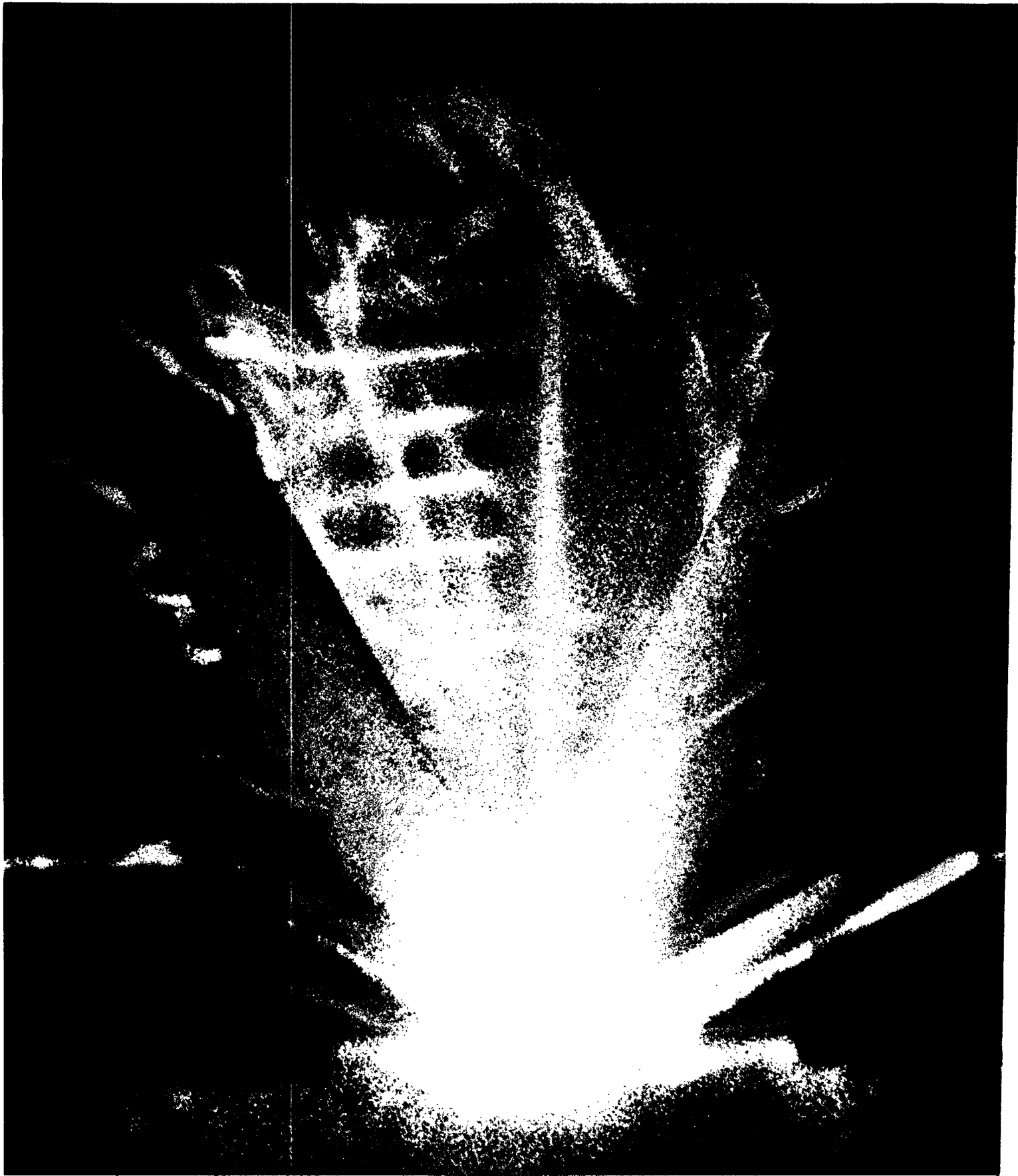
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using conventional weapons, despite the best efforts of the United States. Does anybody seriously think that the President of the United States would put 1 million American lives at risk by launching a nuclear attack on the Soviet Union to force its retreat from Europe? This points to the need for us to enlarge and strengthen our conventional forces, so that we can have some options on those few occasions when force is necessary. Strong conventional forces and the will to use them would be a deterrent.

Finally, it does not make any difference whether SALT II is ratified. I oversimplify, but only to emphasize two much more important matters. First, we must develop a coherent foreign policy, the thrust of which is to insure the security of the United States. We must define those areas which are essential to our security (one would think that Western Europe, the Middle East, Japan, and our own hemisphere might do for starters) and make plans to defend them. And we must have the *will* to use all means necessary to protect our security. If we have the will, then we will see to it that we will always have nuclear parity with the Soviet Union, with or without SALT II. If we have the will, we can build up our conventional military forces consistent with our security goals. If we have the will, we will be able to end our embarrassing impotence. . . .

SAM ADKINS

Easton, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Eugene V. Rostow does his cause a disservice by the approach he uses in "The Case Against SALT II." While I recognize that proponents of the second round of SALT have often resorted to emotional appeals and the use of a highly selective melange of facts, assertions, and wishful thinking in promoting their cause, this ought not to result in the adoption of similar tactics by the opponents of SALT II. . . . Even without becoming emotionally involved, it is easy to have serious doubts about certain provisions of SALT II and the assumptions from which they stem, as they have been revealed at this writing. When discussing these in a sophisticated forum such as COMMENTARY, however, sweeping assertions, misstatements, and flights of fancy masquerading as logic

tend to detract from the effectiveness of the arguments. . . .

- It is specious to argue, as Mr. Rostow does, that the Soviets violated U.S. unilateral interpretations made in connection with the 1972 Interim Agreement, since the USSR had not agreed to them. One can complain about the lack of U.S. domestic reactions to these "breaches," although the existence of such Soviet actions has never been satisfactorily demonstrated.

- I am puzzled by Mr. Rostow's equating "hard" targets with "defended" targets. Clearly, hard targets are more difficult to damage or destroy than are soft targets, and one reason for increasing the number of U.S. strategic warheads is to counteract the hardening of Soviet targets. Whether this move by itself is sufficient may be open to question, but this matter can be discussed without raising the specter of a "hard-target gap." The ACDA study which is being criticized may make inadequate allowance for anti-aircraft defenses, but one need not become overly concerned about the current Soviet anti-missile defenses. If there is evidence that these exceed the 100 ABM launchers of the type allowed by the ABM Treaty of SALT I, then the U.S. should view this as cause for abrogation of the treaty. At present, such evidence does not appear to exist.

- I am also puzzled by the linking of Soviet anti-satellite capacity with our verification methods. Certainly the Soviet capacity to destroy our satellites can create serious problems in the event of hostilities. At such a point, however, there should no longer be any concern about verifying provisions of an arms-limitation treaty. It is in the context of war-waging and not treaty verification that the U.S. needs to take measures to protect its satellites against Soviet anti-satellite systems.

- To say that the Soviets' SS-16 ICBM's are indistinguishable from their SS-20 IRBM's is to say that a tractor-trailer is indistinguishable from a tractor with no trailer attached. I am puzzled by the great concern expressed over the Soviets' reserve missiles or their capability to break out of the treaty limits rapidly, in light of the earlier statement that the number of our hard targets is not increasing. If the Soviets are indeed stockpiling missiles for reloading their launchers, it would imply that their initial load

may not be able to destroy the targets assigned to it.

- Were one to accept the statement that Soviet expenditures for strategic weapons have been increasing at the rate of 8 per cent annually in real terms for a period of sixteen years, then one would come to the indeed startling conclusion that the Soviet Union is now spending almost $3\frac{1}{2}$ times (3.426 times) as much money on them as it did in 1963! Were this true, the Soviet Union would be wasting money at a prodigious rate, for the results of these expenditures surely do not match their costs.

- The disparity over casualties which would result from a nuclear exchange has been the subject of much analysis and even more agonizing. I agree that it is not inconceivable that a Soviet leadership would be willing to risk 10 or even 20 or 30 million casualties in return for inflicting 100 million on us. Certainly, their taking advantage of such a perceived disparity in casualties for political purposes is much more conceivable, and therefore the prospect is alarming. Redressing such a perceived imbalance is something the U.S. should not neglect to do. It can be done within the framework of SALT II, provided the Executive Branch, Congress, and the public are willing to go through with it.

- I agree that disarmament by example is not an effective way to achieve bilateral reductions of forces. In this regard, cancellation of the B-1 and slowing down the work on MX and Trident do not appear to have succeeded in eliciting Soviet restraint. It is misleading to try to link the deferral of the neutron bomb to the expectation of a similar Soviet concession in SALT; the neutron warhead is primarily designed for artillery shells, which are not covered by SALT negotiations.

- It is not clear what additional naval forces are required to fulfill our security treaties. Rapid replenishment of American forces in Europe in time of war can be better accomplished without the need for additional naval forces, if equipment pre-positioning and air-lift capacity were increased. The Soviet navy in other parts of the world can be countered with assets which do not have to be naval forces. If indeed there is a lack of willingness on the part of the administration to counter Soviet expansionism, then there is plenty of

cause for concern. However, the administration's refusal to ask for naval forces in the amount Mr. Rostow considers adequate is not necessarily cause for concern. . . .

To repeat, SALT II should not be considered in isolation, but in the context of overall U.S. foreign and military policy, as Mr. Rostow rightly suggests. But let this be done in a thorough, dispassionate, in short, scholarly manner.

ROBERT I. WIDDER
Chevy Chase, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:
. . . The format of a letter to the editor limits the effective criticism one can make of an article as complex and formidable as Eugene V. Rostow's. But I would like to take issue with at least some of his assumptions, interpretations, and conclusions.

Mr. Rostow asserts that the driving force behind the Soviet Union's military build-up is its push for superiority which, if achieved, would result in an ability to force American acquiescence in Soviet political demands. This is certainly a plausible interpretation but hardly one that can or should be treated as axiomatic. Daniel Yergin, a noted student of strategic relations, has asserted that there are numerous interpretations of the Soviet Union's military build-up, including: the attempt to establish a credible deterrent; bureaucratic momentum (with which we are well acquainted in this country); a feeling of vulnerability vis-à-vis the West and China (and, indirectly, as a result of growing instability in East Europe); and the self-perpetuating momentum of the arms race. In fact, it is quite possible that the Soviet military build-up is indicative of genuine fear of a nuclear conflagration and not evidence that the Soviet Union is planning to launch one.

Why is Mr. Rostow justified in focusing only upon the most insidious interpretation? He claims two arguments in support of his thesis: the first is that Soviet strategic doctrine asserts that strategic superiority can be achieved and that strategic wars can, in fact, be won (and should not be rejected out of hand as unthinkable). The second justification is that the Soviet Union's build-up is unprecedented and beyond the scope of what is necessary for the establishment of stable deterrence.

Neither argument is entirely con-

vincing. Regarding the first, analysts are hardly in agreement when discussion involves the attitudes of Soviet political leaders and general-staff members on strategic war. While some analysts . . . concur with Mr. Rostow's conclusions, other equally noted scholars do not. The current Ambassador to Bulgaria, Raymond Garthoff (*International Security*, Summer 1978), cites the late Major General Nikolai Talenski, former editor of the Soviet military-theoretical journal, *Military Thought*: "In our days there is no more dangerous illusion than the idea that thermonuclear war can still serve as an instrument of politics, that it is possible to achieve political aims by using nuclear weapons and still survive. . . ." Garthoff marshals this and numerous other recent citations from key political figures and military leaders to support his contention that the Soviets recognize the utility and necessity of a stable strategic balance and that a strong Soviet military is necessary to protect the Soviets from the capricious and counterrevolutionary use of Western military power. . . .

Mr. Rostow's characterization of the Soviet Union's military build-up as "without parallel in modern history" is similarly open to alternative interpretation. The current Soviet build-up is no more striking than the U.S. build-up during the 50's and 60's. Furthermore, in an article specifically addressing the question, "What Are the Russians Up To?" (*International Security*, Summer 1978), Congressman Les Aspin, former Pentagon economist and current member of the House Armed Services Committee, argues that the Soviet build-up is far less drastic than those engaged in by the Nazis prior to World War II, the Arabs and Israelis prior to the 1973 war, and the North Koreans prior to their invasion of South Korea. Furthermore, he demonstrates with fourteen different tests that the Soviets' build-up is far from dramatic; that, in fact, they have not been adding to their forces at rates much greater than those needed to replace aging equipment.

Mr. Rostow's Soviet-military-build-up thesis can also be questioned on other grounds. Mr. Rostow and members of the Committee on the Present Danger never tire of comparing Soviet and American defense-spending levels in dollars and concluding that we are being

outspent; they see this as evidence of the Soviets' intentions to surpass us militarily. What they do not tell us is that dollar comparisons exaggerate Soviet defense expenditures relative to our own. According to Franklyn Holzman, professor of economics at Tufts University and author of *Financial Checks on Soviet Defense Expenditures*, if the same expenditure comparisons were made in Soviet rubles, they would exaggerate American defense expenditures relative to those of the Soviet Union! Certainly, the impact of different data on the question at hand deserves some attention from Mr. Rostow.

One must also remember that the research-and-development decisions regarding the weapons systems that are coming on line today were made eight and twelve years ago, before the establishment of détente. It is unrealistic, then, to damn current Soviet behavior for decisions made during less amicable times. . . .

Finally, Professor George Kistiakowsky, a member of the Manhattan Project and special assistant to President Eisenhower for science and technology, has recently suggested that many of the Soviets' deployments of new ICBM's were due to problems in efficiently controlling their own military-industrial complex. The fact that the Soviets tested at least thirteen ICBM designs to our six . . . bespeaks terrible waste and inefficiency as much as it does a relentless quest for superiority.

A second major assumption in "The Case Against SALT II" is that the size of American strategic forces must quantitatively correspond to comparable elements in the Soviet establishment. However, General Maxwell Taylor recently advocated, in the American Enterprise Institute's *Defense Review*, that a superior criterion for establishing the size of our forces is how many weapons we need (irrespective of the Soviet Union's forces) to destroy specific Soviet target systems. At this point we return to the fundamental question about SALT II: namely, whether SALT II would deny the U.S. this capability. Professor Kistiakowsky thinks not. In the first place, American land-based ICBM's carry less than 25 per cent of our strategic warheads; the rest are deployed upon strategic bombers and submarines. And in the next few years, the percentage of warheads carried by submarines and aircraft is likely to increase. On

ONCE IN A GREAT WHILE an artist appears whose work is not only beautiful and utterly original, but whose vision seems uniquely suited to the taste of a particular audience of art lovers. Just such a happy conjunction has occurred in the case of the young American artist David Bennett, from whom the editors of COMMENTARY have commissioned this strikingly brilliant original print. Two hundred impressions have been made. One of them has been presented to the Jewish Museum in New York, where it now forms a part of the permanent collection. The plates have been destroyed, and no more impressions will ever be executed.

THE WORK The venerable patriarch Jacob is captured at the moment of bestowing his precious gift, the coat of many colors, on the child of old age whom he loved, as the Bible says, "more than any other of his sons." At the center, Joseph the dreamer looms monumentally as his older brothers look on in distress and envy and his father wraps the legendary robe around him.

THE TECHNIQUE In this linoleum cut, the artist has utilized a highly decorative style with simplified forms expressed in bright, flat colors. Never has the coat of many colors appeared so rainbow-like or breathtakingly vivid. By limiting himself to the three primary colors of red, blue, and yellow, juxtaposing and surprinting to explore their potential for richness and contrast, the artist has achieved a technical tour-de-force in which surface brilliance and depth of feeling combine to produce a work of sinuous beauty.

THE ARTIST David Bennett is a rare phenomenon. He is an American whose initial recognition has been earned abroad, and whose acclaim has turned largely on his sensitive and profound

handling of religious subjects. Since his first one-man exhibition at the Galerie Delfs in Munich in 1974, his work has been seen and repeatedly applauded throughout Western Europe. A typical European review extols the jewel-like effect of his work; another compares him to Chagall "in his ability to free biblical representations from crusty traditions and present them anew." Bennett's first American one-man exhibition will open next fall at the Maurice Spertus Museum in Chicago, and will travel from there to the Judah L. Magnes Museum in San Francisco, the Skirball Museum in Los Angeles, and the Jewish Museum in New York, among others.

THE EDITION A limited edition of two hundred impressions of *Joseph's Coat of Many Colors* has been executed in Europe by the firm of George Andor, and these, signed and numbered by the artist, have been handsomely framed in New York City at the Gallery of Graphic Arts. The 17"x20½" printed image has been matted to 25"x30". In a gold-toned metal frame, with all-rag white mat, *Joseph's Coat of Many Colors* is a work of enduring artistic value.

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Joseph's Coat of Many Colors by David Bennett

TWO HUNDRED IMPRESSIONS of this brilliant original print have been commissioned by the editors of Commentary and issued in a single, serially numbered and signed edition. Handsomely framed, they are available only to readers of Commentary and members of the Jewish Book Club, and there is a limit of one to a purchaser.

the other hand, a far greater percentage of the Soviets' warheads is land-based. Since it is generally held that land-based systems are the most vulnerable components of the nuclear triad, the Soviets appear to be in a far more tenuous situation than the U.S.

Furthermore, one must also consider the following: (1) the U.S. has more bombers (B-52's and FB-111's) than the Soviet Union and we keep 30-40 per cent on constant alert (as opposed to a Soviet percentage of zero); (2) the Pentagon, other non-governmental institutions such as the Center for Defense Information, and individuals such as Kistiakowsky estimate that 80-85 per cent of the aging B-52's pooh-pooed by Mr. Rostow could penetrate Soviet air defenses (using short-range attack missiles, electronic countermeasures, and cruise missiles); (3) the U.S. maintains more submarines (with more warheads) at sea than the Soviets; and (4) our submarines are quieter and therefore relatively invulnerable to Soviet anti-submarine warfare (and are expected to remain so for at least 7-10 years according to the Center for Defense Information). When all these factors are taken into consideration, there is no doubt that the U.S. could destroy the Soviet Union as a functioning society, the latter's crude and impractical civil-defense program notwithstanding. In fact, the CDI . . . estimates that even in the event of a Soviet first strike against the United States, we would still be able to destroy (depending on various scenarios) 70-95 per cent of all Soviet industry and 30 to 94 million Soviet citizens immediately (not to mention the millions of subsequent deaths due to radiation sickness, starvation, etc.) . . .

From my comments above, one might draw a conclusion about the Soviet-American strategic relation that is very different from Mr. Rostow's. This is not to say that SALT II has no weaknesses. . . . Nevertheless, to argue against the treaty on the basis of tenuous assumptions and questionable interpretations presented as gospel truths is not a service to the American public. . . .

JOHN M. WEINSTEIN
Kennesaw College
Marietta, Georgia

EUGENE V. ROSTOW writes:

1. I can only say "Thank you" to John J. Cox for his thoughtful letter, and "Amen" to his reflec-

tions on the relationship between ideas and events.

2. I agree with parts of Sam Adkins's letter, and disagree with others. He is surely right in urging the United States to adopt a coherent foreign policy, and assemble the conventional and nuclear forces required to make it good. We have lacked anything which might be called a strategy—an understood notion of what we are doing abroad and why—since the collapse of our policy in Vietnam.

Mr. Adkins and I part company, however, at the next stage of his argument. He seems to believe that we can define our national interests on a static geographical basis, and establish spheres of influence which the Soviet Union can be persuaded (or forced) to respect: "Western Europe, the Middle East, Japan, and our own hemisphere might do for starters," he writes. But the Soviet leaders have never accepted any such notion; on the contrary, they really believe in "inevitable conflict," "the victory of socialism," and all the rest of it. Even more important, they act on that belief. The Soviet Union is pursuing a flexible and wide-ranging strategy intended to transform the balance of power, and assure Soviet domination of world politics: to cut the ties among the United States, Europe, Japan, and China, and to bring these enormous centers of power under Soviet control. In the perspective of Soviet strategy, it is clear that while it will always be in our interest to assure the independence of the major constellations of power, no region of the world can be excluded *a priori* from the range of our concern. Even the Carter administration has noticed the dynamic quality of the world political process: it has decided that in the context of the Soviet thrust for control of the Middle East, we must act to prevent a Soviet takeover of North Yemen.

Secondly, Mr. Adkins contends that nuclear weapons are useless except to deter the "final 'Big Bang'"; that the nuclear balance between the Soviet Union and the United States has no relationship to the conduct of diplomacy or the use of conventional forces in limited war; and that our allies cannot rely on "our nuclear umbrella." Here, too, I disagree. Thus far, only our nuclear umbrella has protected Europe, Japan, and many other places from being overrun or

brought to heel; the state of the nuclear balance has been the ultimate element in all the Soviet-American confrontations since 1945. The "linkage" between the nuclear balance and conflicts conducted by other means cannot be dismissed, as President Carter is now trying to do. That linkage, and not the "final 'Big Bang,'" is what the battle over SALT II is all about. Our second-strike nuclear capacity, which served us well in the crises over Berlin, Korea, Cuba, and many other places, is now threatened by the prodigious Soviet nuclear build-up since SALT I. The loss of our credible second-strike capability, which is the implicit premise of SALT II, would expose the United States both to military defeat and to political coercion based on the threat of defeat.

Finally, I disagree with Mr. Adkins that the verifiability of SALT II is no problem "for five years or so." In reaching his judgment, Mr. Adkins relies on an article by Congressman Aspin, which has been devastatingly analyzed by Dr. Amrom H. Katz in a recent monograph.

The question of SALT verification is a bizarre fantasy. Since the Soviet Union has only recently agreed to provide us with any figures at all about their programs, the negotiations have been conducted on the basis of American figures: our statistics about our own activities and our intelligence estimates of what the Soviets are doing. In short, we have been negotiating with ourselves. Therefore, the Soviets know (as we do not) how good or bad our intelligence is—a factor of immense importance in crisis management.

The SALT II treaty purports to regulate the number of deployed launchers, not the number of missiles: the treaty was negotiated only with reference to elements of the problem which could be observed by "national means"—i.e., by satellites or electronic surveillance.

But no one can be killed by a launcher. Missiles, not launchers, are weapons. Secretary of Defense Brown has publicly announced that the Soviet Union continues to manufacture hundreds of missiles which are not deployed, but stored in buildings where we cannot photograph them or "hear" them on our electronic devices. Other estimates of continuing So-

viet missile production are even higher.

In short, the treaty cannot be verified at all. Missiles located in buildings can be fired just as well as missiles in deployed launchers. The treaty deals with the wrong things, as Paul Nitze has been pointing out for some three years. It may have been reasonable in 1972, given the long American lead in the art of MIRVing, and the then state of the Soviet nuclear arsenal, to make deployed launchers a rough index of nuclear power. This is no longer possible.

There are other aspects of the problem of monitoring and verification—the loss of our surveillance stations in Iran, the encrypting of Soviet signals, etc. Important as they are, they are all secondary to the basic fact that SALT II is unverifiable.

It should be noted, of course, that verification is not the principal difficulty with SALT II. It is a bad treaty for the United States, and a bad treaty is bad even if verifiable.

3. Robert I. Widder's letter is an essay in contradictions. He takes both sides of most critical issues, and ignores others.

Mr. Widder accuses me of "arguing speciously" that the Soviets violated unilateral American interpretations of the 1972 Interim Agreement, since the USSR had not agreed to them. But I did not "argue" on the subject, speciously or otherwise. All I did was to point out what had happened. Mr. Widder also contends, inconsistently: (a) that the existence of such Soviet actions has never been demonstrated, and (b) that we should have reacted to them "domestically."

Here, it would appear, Mr. Widder is confusing alleged violations of the Interim Agreement itself, about which a contentious literature exists, and Soviet violations of the American unilateral interpretations, about which there is complete agreement.

The background of our decision to announce "unilateral interpretations" of SALT I was an important aspect of the Non-Proliferation Treaty ratification a few years earlier. During the NPT negotiations and ratification debate, we took the position that if a European political entity were to develop, it would "succeed" to the nuclear position of Britain and France. The Soviet Union would not accept this view. The admin-

istration then testified before the Senate that this was what the Non-Proliferation Treaty meant, and that if the Soviet Union ever took a different position, we should regard the treaty as abrogated. The Soviets have been silent on the subject—so far.

The problem of our unilateral interpretations of SALT I cannot be dismissed so airily as Mr. Widder does. Our unilateral interpretations of the 1972 Interim Agreement, like the comparable unilateral interpretation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, were the basis on which the SALT I agreements were presented to the American people and ratified by Congress.

The U.S. Unilateral Statement on heavy missiles and the subsequent Soviet deployment of "heavy" missiles offer a classic example of the confusion surrounding Soviet "compliance" with SALT I. On May 26, 1972, the U.S. delegation made the following statement:

The U.S. delegation regrets that the Soviet delegation has not been willing to agree on a common definition of a heavy missile. Under these circumstances, the U.S. delegation believes it necessary to state the following: The United States would consider any ICBM having a volume significantly greater than that of the largest light ICBM now operational on either side to be a heavy ICBM. The U.S. proceeds on the premise that the Soviet side will give due account to this consideration.

On June 15, 1972, Dr. Kissinger stated:

Now with respect to the definition of heavy missiles, this was the subject of extensive discussions at Vienna and Helsinki and finally Moscow. No doubt one of the reasons for the Soviet reluctance to specify a precise characteristic is because undoubtedly they are planning to modernize within the existing framework some of the weapons they now possess. The agreement specifically permits the modernization of weapons. There are, however, a number of *safeguards*. First, *there is the safeguard that no missile larger than the heaviest light missile that now exists can be substituted*. Secondly, there is the provision that the silo configuration cannot be changed in a significant way and then the agreed interpretive statement or the interpretive statement which we made, which the other

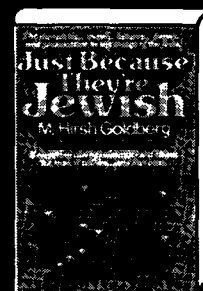
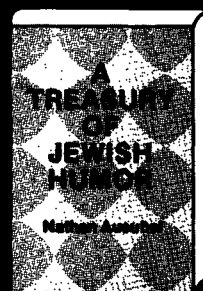
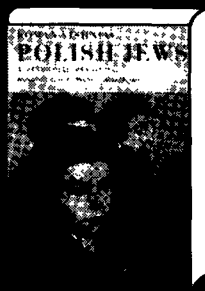
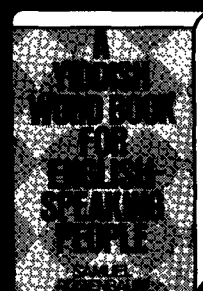
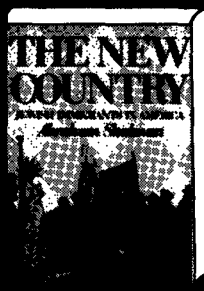
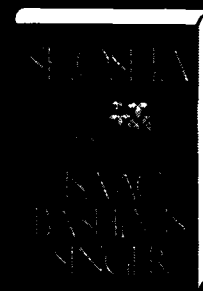
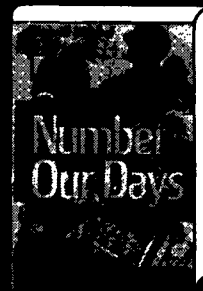
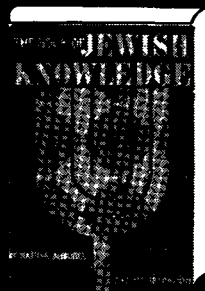
side stated reflected its views also, that this meant that it could not be increased by more than 10 to 15 per cent. We believe that these *two statements*, taken in conjunction, give us an adequate safeguard against a substantial *substitution of heavy missiles for light missiles*. . . . As far as the break between the light and heavy missiles is concerned, we believe that we have assurances through the *two safeguards* that I have mentioned to you (emphasis added).

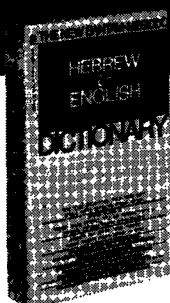
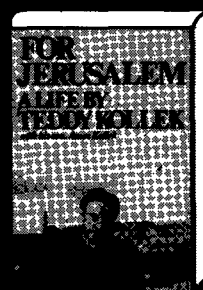
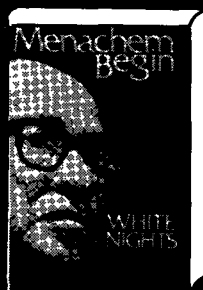
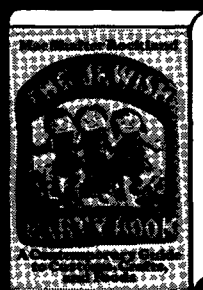
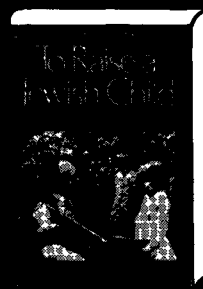
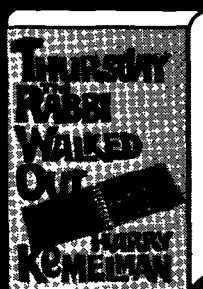
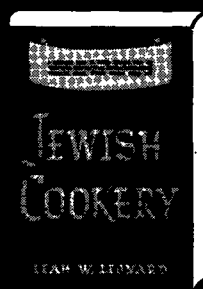
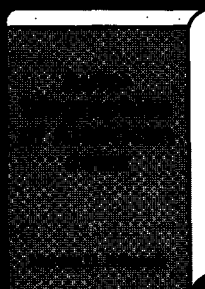
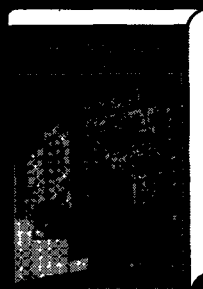
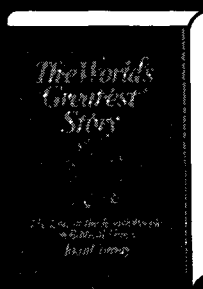
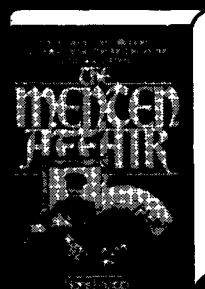
Thus, the Nixon administration described and explained the SALT I agreements as if the Common Understandings and Unilateral Statements were binding. The failure of the United States to enforce Soviet compliance with what we claimed was a restriction on heavy missiles was therefore politically and militarily damaging.

Politically, it forced the United States to retreat from its initial definition of the SALT I agreements. That experience throws a cloud over many features of the SALT II treaty, particularly its exclusion of the Backfire bomber. And it constitutes a poor precedent for dealing with verification problems under SALT II. Since compliance with SALT II cannot be fully verified, the administration now talks of "adequate verifiability." It is not difficult to foresee endless controversy over the significance and adequacy of non-verifiable events. If the history of SALT I comes to represent the pattern, those controversies will all be settled by American acquiescence in the Soviet position, based on our reluctance to denounce the treaty.

Militarily, under the terms of SALT II, the Soviet Union's ballistic-missile force will consist largely of "heavy missiles"—the most capable and threatening first-strike weapons in their arsenal.

Mr. Widder's second point eludes me. I cannot find evidence to indicate that my article confused "hard" targets and "defended" targets. I was pointing out one of the many deficiencies of the ACDA attempt to compare Soviet and American nuclear power on the basis of unrealistic assumptions and stressing the significance of Soviet active and passive defenses for the purposes of the ACDA comparison. Mr. Widder concedes that the ACDA study makes "inadequate allowance" for Soviet anti-aircraft defenses. It would be





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equally true to add that it makes inadequate allowance for anti-missile and civil-defense measures in reducing the effectiveness of our second-strike capability. And the Department of Defense has recently announced that its earlier optimism about the invulnerability of cruise missiles was unjustified.

With regard to the vulnerability of our satellites, I disagree with Mr. Widder that the issue could be significant only in the context of full-fledged war. Surely the destruction of our satellites would be a hostile act. But the Soviets could say it had been an unfortunate accident. And there would be Americans to echo the claim—with relief. But even if the deliberate destruction of our satellites were admitted, what could we do? Invade East Germany, Poland, or Czechoslovakia, facing huge Soviet conventional-force superiority? Blow up Moscow, in the face of the present Soviet nuclear arsenal? The Committee on the Present Danger has been calling the attention of the public to this growing imbalance and its political consequences since 1976. The implacable arithmetic of the nuclear balance is the key to the entire Soviet-American relationship.

I did say that the Soviet SS-16 ICBM's are "indistinguishable" from their mobile SS-20 IRBM's, as Mr. Widder charges. I also pointed out that the SS-20's could be quickly converted into SS-16's by adding a stage, thus altering the strategic balance. The two missiles use the same transporters, erectors, and launchers. If an SS-20 is placed in an SS-16 canister, the two missiles are totally indistinguishable. If not, it becomes a sticky problem for the experts in satellite photography, like that of attempting to distinguish the various series of MIG's. The differences are not nearly so clear as those used in Mr. Widder's vivid metaphor.

But, Mr. Widder says, why should we worry about Soviet missiles in reserve or the capacity to break out of treaty limits quickly? The fact that the Soviets are stockpiling missiles, in his view, indicates only that they are not sure of their first-strike capacity. But Mr. Widder assumes that the Soviet Union is stockpiling missiles only to reload their deployed launchers. I have not found any reference in his letter to the Soviet capacity to launch missiles from factories or other buildings. One of the most

fundamental flaws of SALT II is that it deals in this area only with certain types of launchers, which are ill-defined in any case. There is no law of physics which says that missiles can be fired only from a hardened silo visible to satellite photography.

The Soviet purpose in stockpiling missiles on a large and continuing scale therefore is fundamental to their basic strategy. With overwhelming power in hand, they could realistically hope to corece and paralyze our foreign policy, and force us to retreat into isolation and impotence.

Mr. Widder questions the figures I used for Soviet expenditures on nuclear weapons. A recent CIA study, "A Dollar Cost Comparison of Soviet and U.S. Defense Activities, 1968-78," states that, excluding research and development, "the level of Soviet activity for strategic forces measured in dollars was two and a half times that of the United States. . . . In 1978, the Soviet level was about three times that of the United States." Soviet expenditures for research and development are also higher.

But Mr. Widder's letter then takes a wholly inconsistent course. Having dismissed the Soviet drive toward nuclear superiority as a waste of money, a chimera, or both, he suddenly accepts it as an ominous threat. We should, he says, act effectively to prevent the Soviet Union from achieving a position of strength like that we had during the Cuban missile crisis—that is, a position from which they could inflict 100 million casualties on us, while we could in return inflict only 10, 20, or 30 million casualties on them. The Soviet leadership would be willing to risk such an exchange, Mr. Widder believes, and, even more clearly, they would be willing to exploit "such a perceived disparity" for political purposes. He believes that SALT II would not keep us from preventing the development of such an "alarming" imbalance. In my article, I contend the contrary. Mr. Widder does not address my argument on this crucial point.

Mr. Widder agrees also that unilateral disarmament on our part in the hope of inducing the Soviet Union to follow suit has not worked and will not work. But he wonders why we need more naval forces if, as the President says, our treaty commitments will be honored, and the Middle East protected.

Pre-positioning supplies and airlift, important as they are, are simply not yet a substitute for sea-lift in modern warfare, as experience in the Middle East war of October 1973, and since, amply demonstrates.

The CIA study states that "evidence on weapon systems currently in production and development, continuing capital construction at major defense industries' plants, and the increasing costs of modern weapons indicates that the long-term growth trend in Soviet defense activities will probably continue into the 1980's." And General David C. Jones, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has said that SALT II will not cause a decrease in the Soviet military effort and that with or without SALT, the U.S. is going to have to increase spending by the same amount to assure our security. Secretary of Defense Brown testified before the Senate Budget Committee that the Soviet Union will have military superiority over the United States in five years if current spending trends continue. It is clear that the prodigious Soviet spending for defense has placed the Soviet Union on the threshold of military superiority.

I agree with Mr. Widder that SALT II should not be considered in isolation but in the context of overall U.S. foreign and military policy. I should, however, go one step further—SALT II must be considered in relation to Soviet objectives. When this is done, it is easy to see why the soft bargain of SALT II is now a hard sell.

4. John M. Weinstein's letter raises the fundamental question—how should we judge what the Soviets are up to? He asks whether one could not consider hypotheses less negative than mine about Soviet intentions. In principle, there is an infinite number of hypotheses which could explain a given set of events. But one empirical fact inconsistent with a hypothesis requires the hypothesis to be discarded as a possible explanation of what is happening. It is simply too late in the day, in view of what the Soviet Union is doing and what its leaders are saying, to consider the soothing explanations offered by Congressman Aspin, Ambassador Garthoff, Professor Kistiakowsky, Daniel Yergin, and other apologists for Soviet policy.

Mr. Weinstein refers to "détente" as a political fact—an "amicable"

one, too. Here I completely disagree. Détente is a political myth, propagated by President Nixon. It has no objective reality, save in the travels of ballet companies. Soviet behavior since 1972 has been decidedly more aggressive and more threatening than at any earlier stage of the cold war.

I agree with Mr. Weinstein that our forces should not be the mirror image of Soviet forces, since their missions are different. An analysis of the two forces was published by the Committee on the Present Danger in 1978. It concludes, taking differences of mission fully into account, that we are very close indeed to the edge of strategic and tactical inferiority.

Egypt and Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "How Not to Make Peace in the Middle East" [March], a critique of President Carter's efforts to achieve peace in this turbulent area, Theodore Draper correctly relates post-Camp David difficulties to various aspects of the thirty years of conflict in the area. I can agree with the cogency of many of his observations, but not with some of his historical "facts."

Reviewing the background of the June 1967 war, Mr. Draper concludes that the "war was deliberately provoked by Egypt with the open aim of extinguishing the Jewish state."

As the American chargé d'affaires in Cairo at the time, I was privy to all military and political intelligence available in Washington and presumably in Jerusalem as well. Subsequently, I have studied the official records and, in particular, the publicly expressed views of the Israeli military commanders.

In quoting from Nasser's May 26 speech, Mr. Draper omits the first operative phrase (although including it in his book, *Israel and World Politics*): *If Israel embarks on an aggression against Syria and Egypt . . . the battle will be a general one and our basic objective will be to destroy Israel . . .* (emphasis added)—quite a significant omission.

Since the morning of June 5 found the Egyptian air force on the ground; a noon appointment for the newly-designated American ambassador to present his credentials to Nasser; and the Egyptian Vice President packing his bags to

fly to Washington, prepared to make the commitments to deescalate the crisis which had been extracted by two Johnson envoys—including an obligation not to take any military initiatives—it is difficult to believe that ". . . Nasser even correctly guessed the exact timing of the Israeli attack. . . ."

Whether he knew it was "inevitable" or overestimated the possibilities of a political solution, is still an unanswered question. Mohammed Heikal had no illusions, nor did the American embassy, which began evacuating dependents on May 25. But Washington was taken very much by surprise, relying on what was thought to be a May 26 Israeli commitment to refrain from any military action for two weeks.

With reference to the Egyptian military posture, it is well to remember that the bulk of its combat forces were bogged down in the Yemen civil war. Those in the Sinai were in defensive, not attack deployment. According to the February 29, 1968 *Jerusalem Post*, Gen-

eral Rabin is quoted as saying: "I do not believe that Nasser wanted war. The two divisions he sent into the Sinai on May 14 would not have been enough to unleash an offensive against Israel. He knew it and we knew it." Generals Weizman, Bar-Lev, and Peled have made similar assessments. Very possibly, the Israeli government and population as a whole genuinely believed that "survival" was at stake, but most certainly the top military leaders and intelligence community had no such fears.

All of this and more, still of a highly classified nature, adds up to a consensus among Americans directly involved in the fateful days of May and June 1967 that Nasser had neither the military capability nor the intention of attacking Israel. He sought a political-diplomatic, not a military victory and, in the process, greatly miscalculated both Israeli capabilities and intentions.

The only significance today of an accurate reading of this period is that it helps explain Arab attitudes



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toward return of the "occupied territories," as well as Sadat's position on the "precedence"-of-treaties question. As a deterrent to some future massive Israeli preemptive strike east, he wishes freedom to fulfill his defense and other obligations to whatever Arab governments are involved. In reality, however, he would have neither the military capability, nor probably the will, to do so. The issue is more symbolic than real.

Later, in writing of the 1948 hostilities, Mr. Draper states: "... The Jordanians had invaded the West Bank in 1948 in defiance of the UN partition plan in order to prevent the emergence of an independent Palestinian Arab state. ..." The fact of the matter is that the Palestinians in no way had the capability nor (at the time) the national aspirations essential for such a development. The 4,500-man Arab Legion entered the West Bank several weeks after Jewish para-military elements began pushing east of the UN partition lines. The British government, fearing these forces would occupy all of this area—an objective stated by Menachem Begin at the time and confirmed in his book, *The Revolt*—gave King Abdullah the green light to use the Legion to secure Arab control of the West Bank.

It is a pity that Mr. Draper's engaging analysis contains these factual blemishes. There are enough deficiencies of judgment and lack of realism in the respective approaches to peace of Carter, Begin, and Sadat to support much of what Mr. Draper has to say. Arabs, Israelis, and most Americans perpetuate and cling to many myths regarding the 1948-79 period, but Mr. Draper should know better than to repeat some of them as the basis for a thesis which could just as well stand on its own.

DAVID G. NES
Owings Mills, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Theodore Draper seems to join the roster of people, especially American Jews, who have selected Zbigniew Brzezinski as their pet *bête noire* in the Carter administration. However, I doubt that President Carter appointed Brzezinski National Security Adviser on the basis of his article, "Peace in an International Framework," which appeared in the Summer 1975 issue of *Foreign Policy*, and which Mr. Draper discusses at some length.

Mr. Brzezinski over the years has, of course, expressed his opinion on many foreign-policy issues and it would be unreasonable to assume that Mr. Carter agreed with him in every respect. Therefore, I conclude there is no proof that the President shares *in toto* the opinions expressed by Brzezinski in the summer of 1975. Furthermore, these opinions may have undergone a change since Brzezinski joined the White House—*vide* his remark, "bye-bye PLO." It is equally reasonable to assume that Mr. Carter's campaign oratory underwent changes once the President entered the White House and found himself up against an established and well-entrenched U.S. foreign policy toward the Middle East.

It should also be made clear that what Mr. Draper characterizes as Brzezinski's "oracular pronouncement" to the effect that United States support of Israel "cuts across American *raison d'état*" is nothing but a restatement of State Department policy from the beginning of the establishment of the state of Israel; it is in no way an original Brzezinski idea or a sharp shift to the Arab side, as Mr. Draper states. I for one find it difficult to see any difference worth mentioning between Brzezinski and William P. Rogers or even John Foster Dulles. . . .

If you want an example *par excellence* of how not to make peace, you could recite the response of the Israeli government to Sadat's dramatic trip to Jerusalem in November 1977. There was no reason to doubt Sadat's sincerity in his search for peace, though it undoubtedly was motivated by necessity. . . . It is therefore surprising that the Israeli response to Sadat's visit, which Mr. Draper considers generous, was in effect so half-hearted. . . .

Mr. Draper is correct in mentioning that Sadat in his speech before the Knesset reiterated all the standard Arab demands. This was to be expected from a shrewd negotiator who starts by listing his maximum position and at the same time wants to cover his flanks. Israel should have "struck while the iron was hot." I am convinced this would have avoided much of the subsequent bickering.

The United States has experienced, tragically in Vietnam, that the longer the delay in making peace, the worse the terms. This may have been one of the reasons President Carter, perhaps clumsily

at times, was so anxious to complete the peace negotiations. We have seen the "peace" in Vietnam become worthless, and I greatly fear for the recently concluded peace in the Middle East. The essential ingredient of peace—mutual trust—which could have started growing as of November 1977, has been seriously damaged. . . .

WALTER A. SHELDON
New York City

THEODORE DRAPER writes:

David G. Nes has simply missed the main point. It is that Nasser deliberately set up a situation which he knew would lead to war. In his speech of June 9, 1967, Nasser said: "We realized that the possibility of an armed clash existed and accepted the risk." In his speech of July 23, 1967, Nasser said that he had put the likelihood of war at the beginning of June 1967 at 100 per cent and expected Israel to attack on June 5, 1967. In his recent book, *In Search of Identity*, which I cited, Anwar Sadat confirms both of these points.

I explained in my article, and in one already a decade ago, why Nasser adopted this strategy. As he himself disclosed publicly on July 23, 1967, he wanted to force Israel to attack because he thought that an open Egyptian offensive would inevitably bring in the United States, and he wanted to forestall such an eventuality by making Israel do the attacking. That is why, as I put it, the "war was deliberately provoked by Egypt."

Mr. Nes finds it difficult to believe that "Nasser even correctly guessed the exact timing of the Israeli attack." The odd thing is that he seems to think it is difficult to believe me on this point. The reality is that he finds it difficult to believe Nasser and Sadat, the chief authorities for this statement, in a better position than Mr. Nes or myself to know just what had happened.

Mr. Nes's other difficulties hinge on another simple point. The Egyptian plan and execution were filled with miscalculations. If Nasser and his generals had not overestimated Egyptian strength, they would never have dared to engage in such a risky enterprise. For example, much of Nasser's army was then bogged down in Yemen. That does not mean he did not think he had enough left over to cope with Israel. On the contrary, we know from the trial of the Egyptian mili-

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Strike three.
Get your hand off my knee.
You're overdrawn.
Your horse won.
Yes.
No.
You have the account.
Walk.
Don't walk.
Mother's dead.
Basic events
require simple language.
Idiosyncratically euphuistic
eccentricities are the
promulgators of
triturable obfuscation.
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tary leaders in February 1968 that General Sidqi Mahmud, the air-force commander, expected to lose only 20 per cent of his forces in the event of an expected Israeli attack. Instead, the entire Egyptian air force was caught on the ground on June 5, 1967. That debacle was caused by gross inefficiency piled on grave miscalculation. It does not at all mean what Mr. Nes wants it to mean—that Nasser did not have a war in mind. Nasser's fiasco in Yemen was a factor—but in the sense that he was partly motivated by a desire to make up for it by succeeding against Israel.

Mr. Nes thinks he is telling us something new and important by maintaining that "Nasser had neither the military capability nor the intention of attacking Israel." The word "attacking" needs emphasis here. It was of the essence of Nasser's strategy that Israel should be goaded into attacking Egypt. He himself said so. The offensive that Nasser wanted unleashed was by Israel because his generals assured him—and he wanted to believe—that the losses would be too small to influence the final outcome. It is absurd to convert miscalculations into proof of innocence.

Mr. Nes, moreover, seems to have changed his mind about some of these things. In an interview which appeared in the *Baltimore Sun* of June 13, 1967, and which got him into trouble with the State Department, Mr. Nes stated that he had been convinced as far back as January 1967, six months before the war, that Nasser had been planning a major confrontation with Israel and the West. He complained bitterly that his superiors in Washington had considered him an alarmist. So, right after the June 1967 war, Mr. Nes wanted to take credit for having foreseen it, or at least its likelihood. Now, twelve years later, he wants us to believe that Nasser sought no more than "a political-diplomatic, not a military victory." There is only one flaw in this reasoning—Nasser knew that he could not get a political-diplomatic victory without a military success.

I am singularly unimpressed by Mr. Nes's diplomatic credentials. All the military and political intelligence available in Washington was not enough to save Washington, as Mr. Nes himself now tells us, from having been "taken very much by surprise." In fact, Mr.

Nes's superior in Cairo, then Ambassador Richard H. Nolte, denied that Mr. Nes had been as clairvoyant as he later claimed to have been. Nolte also admitted in the *New York Times* of September 12, 1967, that Egypt's challenge to Israel caught "all of us by surprise." So much for what the military and political intelligence available in Washington was worth.

Mr. Nes informs us that there is a consensus among the Americans directly involved in the fateful days of May and June 1967. That should not be surprising. The same line was pushed by Lucius D. Battle, the U.S. Ambassador in Cairo until early in 1967 and Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs during the war crisis (*New York Times Magazine*, October 21, 1973). This consensus flies in the face of all the hard evidence, including Nasser's own testimony, confirmed by Sadat. This consensus tells more about the Americans directly involved in the fateful days of May and June 1967 than about the events of those days.

Mr. Nes's version of the Jordanian seizure of the West Bank in 1948 is equally untrustworthy. The fact remains that the Jews accepted the partition plan, which provided for an independent Palestinian Arab state, and the Arabs did not. Did the British government also give the forces of Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq the green light to grab as much Palestinian territory as they could? Inter-Arab rivalries were then as now the Palestinian Arabs' boon and curse. The reference to Menachem Begin in 1948 is a red herring; he was not then in a position to determine Israeli policy; the partition plan would never have been accepted if it had been up to him.

As for Walter A. Sheldon, I can assure him that Zbigniew Brzezinski is not my "pet *bête noire* in the Carter administration." All that I sought to point out was that the Carter administration's Middle East policy, culminating in the Soviet-American statement of October 1, 1977, was remarkably similar to the recommendations in Brzezinski's 1975 article. Presumably Brzezinski had something to do with this striking coincidence. After the beginning of 1978, I made no reference to Brzezinski because he stopped writing articles to which his ideas and influence could easily be traced.

As for Brzezinski's "bye-bye PLO" remark, even if we should take it seriously, it was, unfortunately, premature. On March 23 last, President Carter practically invited the PLO to say the right words in order for the United States to start working directly with it. More recently, the PLO's chief propagandist has been given extraordinary permission to tour the United States. "Bye-bye" has given way to "hello-hello." Perhaps Mr. Sheldon should try to find out whether Brzezinski has been opposed to the latest American overtures to the PLO.

In any case, I said nothing as devastating about Brzezinski as is Mr. Sheldon's defense of him. I wonder whether Brzezinski will appreciate the recommendation that there is no difference worth mentioning between him and William P. Rogers or even John Foster Dulles.

Lionel Trilling

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I should like to add a small anecdote about Nicholas Murray Butler, one which might interest readers of Diana Trilling's affecting memoir about Lionel Trilling ["Lionel Trilling, A Jew at Columbia," March].

During 1933-34, I was editor-in-chief of the *Columbia Daily Spectator*. The first editor of Jewish origin to have been elected to the post was Arthur J. Lelyveld in 1932. I was the second. There was some flap with the Dean's office about my election but this, quite likely, was due to a concern with my Norman Thomas politics rather than with my Jewishness.

There was a Columbia tradition that the *Spectator* editor could have access to President Butler at any time. Some business arose which required the joint agreement of President Butler and myself and our signatures on some document. We had several discussions about the business. During one of these sessions, President Butler told me several anecdotes about famous men he had known.

On one occasion, he told me about the time he had been lecturing at, I believe, the University of Toronto. When the lecture was over, a clergyman approached him and said:

"Dr. Butler, I have heard that there are professors on your faculty who do not believe in Jesus Christ. Is that true, sir?"

Dr. Butler said it was. The divine continued:

"Could you, sir, give me their names? I should like to write each of them to persuade them to return to Christ."

And, said Dr. Butler to me, interrupting the reconstructed dialogue:

"I gave him their names—[Irwin] Edman, [Moses] Hadas, [Lionel] Trilling, [Meyer] Schapiro." He listed other names, Jews of course, but I've now forgotten them. But there is no question that as of fall 1933, he was aware of Trilling's presence on the faculty, probably because Trilling and Jacques Barzun had begun team-teaching their famous Columbia Colloquium.

ARNOLD BEICHMAN
Naramata, British Columbia

DIANA TRILLING writes:

I am afraid that I fail to understand the intention of my friend Arnold Beichman's remarks on my memoir. When he writes that "there is no question that as of fall 1933, he [President Butler] was aware of Trilling's presence on the faculty, probably because Trilling and Jacques Barzun had begun team-teaching their famous Columbia Colloquium," he puts me under the necessity of pointing out that in 1933 Lionel Trilling was many years away from being a member of the Columbia faculty; he was a beginning instructor whose presence in the College need not have been known even to all the members of his own department. As to Trilling's having come to Butler's attention through the "famous" Trilling-Barzun Colloquium, they did not begin teaching that course until the fall of 1934.

Solzhenitsyn

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I was astonished to see Abraham Brumberg, in his review of Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago*, Volume III [Books in Review, February], joining the campaign that has been going on for two or three years to discredit, or perhaps to tame, Solzhenitsyn. Given the initial impression made by Solzhenitsyn in the West, such a campaign could only take the form of trying to separate the wheat from the chaff. And here it is: "It would be as inexcusable to ignore its flaws as to underrate its searing [of course!] achievements." What are the searing achievements? Apparently that Solzhenitsyn has written

"the most monumental indictment of Stalinist despotism." But every alert reader in the West has known for twenty years now that Stalin's regime was inhumanly savage. If the importance of Solzhenitsyn consisted only in this, he would not be of any deep interest. Such a view of Solzhenitsyn would have its uses; it would assimilate him, amoeba-like, to the respectable consensus of American opinion since the 50's, neatly removing any need to think about his other, sometimes surprising, opinions.

It is easier for Mr. Brumberg to dismiss the "flaws" in Solzhenitsyn's thought because he can identify them with the "pervasive ethos" of the Soviet Union—as if flaws in a nation's political institutions somehow reproduced themselves in the psychological "ethos" of its writers. A low opinion of Bismarckian Germany does not imply a low opinion of Nietzsche—not even if one thinks they had significant traits in common, because we demand different excellences from a thinker and from a system of government.

In any case, Mr. Brumberg is able to achieve this identification of Solzhenitsyn with the ethos of the regime through a view of the Soviet political order that is as conventional and smug as the reception of Solzhenitsyn it is intended to bolster. The Soviet Union's pervasive ethos consists of "intolerance, lack of historical perspective, a tendency to see the world in Manichean terms, a search for ideological (or religious?) absolutes, a zeal for crusades." These are terms familiar from descriptions of extremism in the United States. But do they describe what is uniquely characteristic of the USSR? Intolerant the USSR certainly is, but to use that word alone misses its distinctiveness: most intolerant regimes in history have no secret police chief known for his contacts with certain selected dissidents. In fact, the kept rebel—like Yevtushenko—is now an institution of the Soviet Union.

I am not sure what "historical perspective" would be, or the lack of it, but there are few regimes so obsessed with history. The USSR dotes on Lenin, on the Revolution, on the "Great Patriotic War" (World War II) in a way that we dote on nothing in the past. "A zeal for crusades?" Perhaps, but into one's account of these crusades one must incorporate the Hitler-

Stalin pact, the wartime negotiations for a separate peace with Nazi Germany, the betrayal of the Greek Communists to Churchill, the abandonment of North Korea—one could go on and on, perhaps ending when the Soviet ruling groups responded to the mining of Haiphong by giving the U.S. President a state dinner in the Kremlin. Is this behavior evidence of "a tendency to see the world in Manichean terms, a search for ideological . . . absolutes"?

Turning to domestic policy, when the Soviet regime made anti-Semitism, the rallying cry of the White counterrevolution, into a political platform after 1946, did it give evidence of a Manichean search for absolutes or of a depth of opportunism never observed in any Western country?

I cite these incidents in Soviet history only to indicate how inadequately considered, and how conventional, is the basis upon which Mr. Brumberg wishes to separate the parts of Solzhenitsyn that we should take seriously from those we should not. I am afraid that we may miss something by such a hasty winnowing. Like many Americans, I do not know exactly what to think of Solzhenitsyn, and some of the things he has said were not what I most wanted to hear. But that seems all the more reason to consider them thoughtfully. Mr. Brumberg's review, on the other hand, is not only thoughtless but a call for thoughtlessness.

CHARLES H. FAIRBANKS, JR.
Yale University
New Haven, Connecticut

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I think Abraham Brumberg has overstated Solzhenitsyn's presumed resignation over his fellow countrymen's lack of will to resist Soviet tyranny. Solzhenitsyn described . . . exactly this will to resist many years before writing Volume III of *The Gulag Archipelago*. In *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*—that is, in those passages censored by Glavlit when the novella was allowed to appear in the pages of *Novy Mir* in 1962—Solzhenitsyn discloses his *zek*-hero, Shukhov's, inner thoughts about one day getting revenge for the inhumane treatment of the labor-camp prisoners. About the civilian bureaucrat, Der, who tyrannizes over the *zeks*, Solzhenitsyn has Shukhov say to himself: "Here he is again. One should get the blood

of this bastard . . . If only the *zeks* would not backbite each other so much . . . the authorities [would have] no power over them." . . .

From exhaustive reading of Solzhenitsyn's writings, I would suggest that the great Russian author finds relative non-resistance among his countrymen to be the result not of flagging courage or flaccid resignation—for which there would be grounds for some sort of apology if it were a characteristic of the Russian people—but rather a consequence of the overwhelming power of that incinerator of human souls, the Soviet "Sewage Disposal System," or simply, the "System." Even so, Volume I recounts numerous instances of unauthorized strikes and peasant unrest in the civilian population in the early years of Soviet rule. By the time of Stalin, . . . the state and party machinery for repressing and terrorizing the people had been so perfected that resistance became foolhardy and sacrificial.

"Rational courage," as Plato once said, is far more effective and commendable than the reckless sort. Of the former sort of courage, today's Russian dissidents give numerous examples. For his own courage in the post-Stalin period of *relatively* relaxed brute terror by the regime, Solzhenitsyn not only does not have to "atone," but should be eminently and justifiably proud. . . .

ALBERT L. WEEKS

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Abraham Brumberg finds it difficult to reconcile "the Christian moralist *par excellence*" who wrote *From Under the Rubble* with the . . . man who cannot forgive a young camp guard for remaining at his service; the Solzhenitsyn who faults Western liberals for their overestimation of Soviet subversion; the opponent of tyranny and historian who can be ambivalent, if not contradictory, in his accounts of the Vlasovites.

Mr. Brumberg's difficulty, I believe, stems from his failure to grasp the consistent spirit which manifests itself in "the contradictions that emerge from [Solzhenitsyn's] writings." The ground of Solzhenitsyn's essay, "Repentance and Self-Limitation," is, in fact, not Christian moralism but self-knowledge: the knowledge gleaned from an empirical study of present and past which leads to the conclusion that

few individuals and no nations are free from vice and error. This argument is made precisely to combat the Soviet ethos of intolerance inspired by an ideological absolute. Since the necessary beginning of the regeneration of morality and truth is reflection on experience, why can Solzhenitsyn not deny forgiveness to the camp guards who have seen for themselves the characters of both inmates and overseers and have failed to test Soviet propaganda by empirical reality? Mr. Brumberg himself cannot forgive the Vlasovites, who could not be defended in Volume I until the reader had been exposed to the full horror of Soviet tyranny. But they were no less creatures of enduring Russian anti-Semitism, and they had no time to form judgments about comparative atrocities. Finally, Solzhenitsyn faults Western liberals not so much for their liberalism as for their failure adequately to defend liberty in fact and principle. . . .

DELBA WINTHROP

Radcliffe College

Cambridge, Massachusetts

ABRAHAM BRUMBERG writes:

I think my critics would be well advised (1) to reread my review (Albert L. Weeks); (2) to reread certain passages of *The Gulag Archipelago*, Volume III (Delba Winthrop); (3) to refrain from speculating about my motives for criticizing Solzhenitsyn (Charles H. Fairbanks, Jr.).

1. I do not see how I could have "overestimated Solzhenitsyn's presumed resignation about his fellow countrymen's lack of will to resist Soviet tyranny" while dwelling on precisely the opposite—that is, on Solzhenitsyn's tribute to his countrymen's struggle against Soviet tyranny.

2. Solzhenitsyn is eminently "consistent," writes Miss Winthrop, in condemning the former camp guard and exonerating—indeed, praising—the Vlasovites. The former, after all, had had ample time "to test Soviet propaganda by empirical reality," while the latter were "creatures of Soviet propaganda" with "no time to form judgments about comparative atrocities." Does this blissful ignorance, I wonder, exculpate the Vlasovites from their own atrocities, about which Solzhenitsyn says nothing? At any rate, the Vlasovites were apparently not all that uninformed. They "knew," says Solz-

henitsyn in Volume III of *The Gulag Archipelago*, that Soviet totalitarianism was infinitely more savage than "even the regime of its pupil Hitler." They had the right, therefore, to assume that "the Western allies had entered this war" not "only against Nazism," but in order to bring about the downfall of the Soviet dictatorship. Yet what, he observes, could you expect of the "same allies for whom Russians had died in World War I, and who then, too, had abandoned our army in the moment of collapse, hastening back to their comforts?" I cannot believe Miss Winthrop is serious in considering this nonsense an example of "knowledge gleaned from an empirical study of present and past."

3. I don't know what and whom Mr. Fairbanks has in mind when he speaks darkly of a "campaign . . . to discredit, or perhaps to tame, Solzhenitsyn," but I should like to assure him that I, for one, have no interest in it. Nor could I care less about "the respectable consensus of American opinion." What does interest me is the striking contradiction between Solzhenitsyn's brilliant gifts as an observer of human suffering and courage, and his penchant for thunderous anathemas and tendentious generalizations; or, if you will, between Solzhenitsyn the artist and the prophet. Since my review dealt with the third volume of *Gulag*, it was this book that I singled out both for its "flaws" and for its "searing achievements." It simply won't do for Mr. Fairbanks to say that in my opinion "the importance of Solzhenitsyn consists *only*" in having written "the most monumental indictment of Stalinist despotism," and then to claim that this opinion is inspired by manipulative considerations (it "would have its uses"). Neither statement is in accord with the facts.

The central problem raised by Mr. Fairbanks—whether Solzhenitsyn truly reflects the "pervasive ethos" of the Soviet Union—is certainly complex and one that my brief remarks could not do justice to. Any systematic attempt to understand the Soviet ethos, for instance, would have to consider the extent to which it has been influenced by certain traditional patterns of *Russian* political culture. Mr. Fairbanks is right in asserting that the traits I listed (intolerance, absolutism, and so on) are only part of the story. But he is wrong

when he implies that opportunism is incompatible with extremism, that an adversary relationship precludes rampant cynicism and flexible accommodations, or that obsession with history is synonymous with historical objectivity (indeed, in the Soviet example the reverse is patently the case).

It would be preposterous for me to suggest that all these distinctive features of Soviet political institutions have "somehow reproduced themselves" in Solzhenitsyn's political "ethos." But it is dismaying to note, as one reads Solzhenitsyn's numerous public statements over the past five years, to what extent his views and attitudes have been shaped by his political-cultural background. Solzhenitsyn's recent interview with the BBC (the *Listener*, London, February 22, 1979) is illustrative. The reader will find it bristling with sweeping condemnations of recent Soviet émigrés who burn with "a fierce hatred, not of the Soviet system, but of Russia itself, of its very people"; of American intellectuals "almost all of whom" (this should be of interest to the readers of COMMENTARY) have an abiding "sympathy for socialism and Communism"; of "Western scholarship" which (pace Mr. Fairbanks) "for 55 years . . . knew nothing about the Gulag" and "did not believe that it existed." They will find it, in short, permeated with the very "ethos of intolerance inspired by an ideological absolute" (Miss Winthrop's words) which the author of *The Gulag Archipelago* and *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* had set out to combat.

Ruth

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "A Reading of Ruth" [February] Evelyn Strouse and Bezalel Porten maintain that Ruth's "first kindness" was to Naomi and her "last kindness" was for the benefit of Boaz. But a more dramatic reading is yielded by the perception that both of Ruth's kind acts entail the continuing refusal to abandon a near-tragic Naomi. At the crossroad, Ruth swears that only death will part her from Naomi. But Naomi feels that a marriage would be just as divisive, hence her speech that she could produce no more sons for the girls to marry: these sons are not as essential for the girls—who would "each find peace in the home of a

husband"—as they are for the solitary Naomi, who would otherwise have no place in either of their new lives. So they might as well depart for Moab now. Eventually Ruth is tempted to cleave to the suitable young fieldhands and is courted by "even rich lads." Instead, she enters into a "redemptive" marriage contract that has Naomi as its legal, familial connection.

This is the "greater, last kindness," which gives Naomi a role

in Ruth's ramified union with Boaz; with the birth of a child, the matriarchal Naomi properly asserts herself in its upbringing and education. The women quip, "a boy was born to Naomi," and the epilogue sounds a national note: the great David was descended from this enterprise.

Could the authors' sonata be a symphony?

AARON LICHTENSTEIN

University of Denver
Denver, Colorado

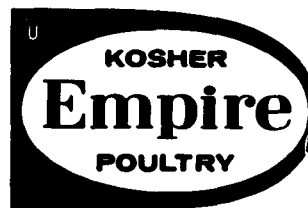
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"Is it your feeling that any cutbacks that come in the use of energy by the American public should be about equally divided between all groups of Americans or is it your feeling that some groups of the American consuming public should have to cut back a good deal more or less than most people?"

Divided equally	65%
Not divided equally	28%
Don't know	7%

Source: March 1979 national probability sample, by telephone, of 1,000 adults. Conducted for Union Carbide by Roger Seasonwein Associates, Inc.

A majority said 'All of Us.'

A majority of Americans believe that all groups in our society should share the burdens of any future energy shortages about equally. They reject the idea that some groups ought to be cut back more, or less, than others. Apparently, Americans have not lost their sense of fairness and shared sacrifice at a time when, as was shown in another Seasonwein poll, 50 percent felt that in the next few months we will be facing energy shortages.

While these questions were part of a survey of American attitudes on energy conservation, they shed light on the related questions of what the public feels is fair in dealing with energy shortages. And in developing public policies for allocating energy in a future shortage, our leaders will have to consider public attitudes as well as such economic realities as the importance of energy resources used as raw materials, rather than fuel.

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This advertisement is part of a continuing series on public opinions and national concerns. For more information, write for your complimentary copy of "Public Attitudes on Energy Conservation," a report of the nationwide survey.

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The Harrisburg Syndrome

Samuel McCracken

I

THE year 1978 ended on a moderately upbeat note for nuclear power. In December, Westinghouse sold two reactors, saving the industry from the embarrassment of a year without orders. More important, at a government facility in Idaho, the first of a series of tests of reactor emergency cooling systems was successful beyond expectation.

For nuclear power, that was the good news. The bad news started early in the new year, when the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) withdrew its endorsement of a summary of its own comprehensive study of reactor safety. In March 1979, the commission shut down five Eastern nuclear plants over doubts about their safety during earthquakes. That same month, Columbia Pictures released *The China Syndrome*, a slick thriller starring Jane Fonda and Jack Lemmon, arguing that nuclear power is terribly dangerous, and that the nuclear industry will go to any length, including murder, to conceal the fact. Also in March there came to trial a lawsuit in which the estate of the late Karen Silkwood, a worker in a nuclear-fuel reprocessing plant, is trying to collect damages from its operator for alleged negligence in safety measures. Then, in March and April, the incident at Three Mile Island.

The reaction to all this has been predictable and can be briefly stated: nuclear opponents say that claims of the absolute safety of nuclear power are now proven false, and call for moratoria of various degrees of rigor; nuclear moderates are saying that we must reconsider nuclear power; and nuclear supporters are in a certain amount of disarray.

Let us examine recent events more closely and try to determine the extent to which such reactions are justified.

December 1979: The LOFT Test

NUCLEAR critics have for many years complained that there has never been a full-scale test of

the emergency core cooling system (ECCS) used in all modern light-water reactors.¹ A similar complaint might have been made prior to 1923 against Frank Lloyd Wright's Grand Hotel in Tokyo; designed to survive a major earthquake, it could be definitively tested only by such an earthquake (a test which in the event it passed with flying colors). In the case of an ECCS, which is designed to prevent a meltdown after a cooling loss in a full-sized reactor operating at full power, the only definitive test would be such an accident.²

Failing this, the Atomic Energy Commission and its successors devised the loss-of-fluid test (LOFT) program. In the LOFT program, a very large-scale model of a nuclear power plant (one-fifth the size of a large commercial reactor, and operating at much less power) is subjected to procedures simulating a major loss-of-coolant accident, and the results are analyzed. The first series of six tests was conducted without operating nuclear fuel in the core. None of these tests was designed to simulate a real accident; the intention, rather, was to gather data about the safety of the system for the next series, using an operating core.

The first test in the second series was carried out on December 10. This test simulated the worst-case loss-of-coolant accident, a so-called "double-guillotine" cut in which a considerable segment of a main coolant pipe is destroyed, allowing full flow of water at both ends of the cut. Computer simulations had predicted that the ECCS would restore cooling in 90 seconds and that the fuel temperature would rise to 1350 degrees F. As it turned out, cooling was restored in 44 seconds and fuel temperature did not rise above 1000 degrees F.

It was hard for nuclear critics to make much hay out of these results, but they tried. The

¹For technical background to this discussion, see "The War Against the Atom," COMMENTARY, September 1977, and exchanges of correspondence in December 1977, March, May, and November 1978.

²Rather lost in the hullabaloo over Three Mile Island is the plain fact that such a test occurred and that, even with evidence of substantial error, the ECCS did what it was designed to do. See p. 33 below.

SAMUEL MCCracken, whose article, "The War Against the Atom" (September 1977), has been widely discussed, is Assistant to the President of Boston University. He is at work on a book about nuclear power.

Union of Concerned Scientists³ claimed that LOFT involved too small a facility to tell us much about the ECCS on a power reactor. This group had previously issued brochures characterizing the first six tests of the ECCS: "When [the ECCS] was tested on small-scale models it consistently failed to function properly." This is a serious distortion of the intent and results of the first test series. As soon as the first test of the second series proved a resounding success, the UCS reversed its stand on the applicability of small-scale tests. When these could be argued, however inaccurately, to have failed, the "failure" was used as evidence for the unreliability of the ECCS; but when one such test was an unambiguous success, they were conveniently declared to have little relevance to full-size reactors.

Moreover, the UCS continued to issue its misleading statement about the alleged failure of all LOFT tests even after the December 10 success. When the inappropriateness of this tactic was suggested to Henry Kendall, the UCS president, he allowed as how his organization would eventually get around to updating its fund-raising materials, iterated the suggestion that LOFT was irrelevant anyhow, and referred his critic to a four-year-old (and generally favorable) discussion of LOFT based on a design that has undergone major changes.⁴ Shame appears to be in short supply at UCS.

January 1979: The NRC and the Rasmussen Report

In 1977, responding to criticisms of its own survey of reactor safety, the so-called Rasmussen Report, or RSS, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission requested an independent critique of the report from a panel headed by Professor Harold Lewis of the University of California.

This panel declared in late 1978 that the RSS was "a substantial advance over previous attempts to estimate the risks of the nuclear option . . . the most complete single picture of the accident probabilities associated with nuclear reactors." The panel also objected to some calculations in the report (leading it to be unsure whether at certain points the RSS had overestimated dangers or underestimated them); to parts of the "executive summary," a twelve-page document meant for laymen; and to the report's peer-review process.

In late January, the NRC withdrew its endorsement not of the RSS itself, but of the executive summary. This action was almost universally misreported in the press as a repudiation of the study itself: editorializing on the event, the *New York Times* said that the NRC had "disowned" the RSS. It was rarely mentioned that Professor Lewis himself had testified before Congress to his belief that the report had erred more often by overestimating dangers than by underestimating them, and that he remained staunchly in favor of nuclear energy.

The UCS (whose use of his report Professor Lewis has characterized as "despicable") was not slow in trying to exploit the NRC action. On the false assumption that NRC licensing procedures were somehow based on the Rasmussen Report, rather than on detailed analysis of individual plants and their compliance with the detailed specifications of the commission's regulations, the UCS called on the NRC to shut down sixteen nuclear plants. The NRC staff ultimately reported what the UCS must have known already, that the commission had almost never relied on the standards implicit in the RSS, but on those spelled out in the Code of Federal Regulations. There were, the staff noted, three cases out of two hundred in which the NRC's changed view of the RSS required rethinking of licenses. Two were now moot, and the third was being restudied.

What remained to the anti-nuclear movement out of all this was the inaccurate statement, repeated widely in the media, that the NRC had repudiated the Rasmussen Report.

March 1979: The Reactors and the Earthquakes

ON March 8, engineers from the Duquesne Light Company, operator of the Beaver Valley #1 reactor at Shippingport, Pennsylvania, and from Stone & Webster, builder of that plant and four others in the East, notified the NRC that they had found an error in computations assessing the resistance of the five plants to earthquakes. As a result of the error, it was not immediately apparent how well the five plants would stand up to a very severe earthquake—that is, one of a magnitude for which there was no historical precedent in the Eastern United States.

The almost immediate response of the NRC was to order the five plants shut down pending further study of their earthquake resistance. The NRC's action is paradigmatic of our approach to nuclear safety. Major earthquakes are next to nonexistent in the areas in which the reactors are sited: probabilities for the affected plants range from 1 in every 10,000 years to 1 in every 1 million years.

A little over a month later, a Richter-force 4 earthquake occurred, its epicenter near Maine Yankee, one of the five closed reactors. Maine Yankee is required to operate through an earthquake of Richter-force 6, that is, one a hundred times as severe as an earthquake of force 4. An earthquake of Richter-force 4, although minor compared to the earthquakes against which the reactors are designed to be protected, was, for New England, a very serious earthquake, for it was

³Despite its highfalutin title, the only credential required for membership in this organization is \$15; UCS refuses to announce the number of scientists in its ranks.

⁴Personal communication; Kendall's Law appears to be formulable thus: "Small-scale simulations are irrelevant to large-scale realities except when it is rhetorically convenient to cite them in evidence."

perceptible to the general public as well as to the seismologists. There was no damage to the cooling system at Maine Yankee; the earthquake was insufficient even to register on its seismological indicators.⁵

In short, a shutdown was made to avert a possibility that the plants might not withstand an event of microscopic probability. For even if it were *certain* that the plants could not survive a major earthquake, the probability of damage from earthquakes would remain tiny. To avert that tiny possibility, we will increase our dependency on imported oil, as George F. Will has pointed out, by as much gasoline as would be saved by closing all our filling stations every Sunday. Yet such is the excruciating care with which the NRC monitored its charges two weeks before Three Mile Island.

This sequence of events—prompt reporting of a hypothetical problem to the NRC by a utility and its constructor, followed by prompt NRC action to close down the affected plants—needs to be remembered in connection with the next of the spring's nuclear events.

March 1979: *The China Syndrome*

COLUMBIA PICTURES' *The China Syndrome* did good business before Three Mile Island and better after. On March 16, when the film was released, Columbia's stock closed at 21 $\frac{5}{8}$; on the Monday after Three Mile Island, it stood at 26 $\frac{7}{8}$.

The film stars Jane Fonda, Jack Lemmon, and its producer, Michael Douglas. The tale is simply told: Fonda plays a feathernews reporter for a Los Angeles television station, somewhat inexplicably assigned to do a series on energy. While visiting a nuclear plant in the company of her flip, hip cameraman, played by Douglas, she witnesses an accident which begins rather like Three Mile Island, but which proceeds to an uncomplicated shutdown, not without an immense amount of implausibility and downright inaccuracy. The cameraman films the scene in the control room during the accident, and they rush back to the station with their scoop, which consists largely of shots of the reactor's shift supervisor, played by Jack Lemmon, behaving like a Jack Lemmon character whose wife has come back from her vacation early and whose mistress is in the bathroom.

At the station, the news director suppresses the story and orders the film locked up. The chairman of the operating utility, fearing financial disaster if the accident delays start-up of a recently completed reactor for even a few weeks, orders the plant superintendent to cover up the accident. The superintendent and the NRC cooperate in a whitewash and an implausibly early restart is scheduled for the reactor.

But the shift supervisor is not fooled, and after a little research discovers a leak of radioactive water from a cooling pipe. The superintendent

pooh-poohs this very ominous discovery, noting that it would cost a good deal of money if the plant were shut down to investigate. The supervisor next discovers that the plant's X-rays of its welds have been faked. He tracks down the construction-company employee who had approved the bogus X-rays and announces his plan to go to the NRC; for his pains, his life is threatened.

Meanwhile, back at the station, the cameraman has stolen the film. The reporter, sent off to look for him, runs into the shift supervisor in a bar near the reactor, where he makes an impassioned defense of the nuclear industry and its safety standards. The next day she discovers that the cameraman has taken the film to the licensing hearing for the new reactor, where he has shown it to a couple of anti-nuclear academics. The same day she learns the story of the bogus X-rays from the supervisor; he promises to supply the evidence to be brought out at the hearing. The reporter goes to the hearing, and finds the cameraman deep in conference with the academics. "You're very lucky to be alive," they inform her, "and so is most of Southern California. They came very near to the China Syndrome."

Back in Los Angeles, the supervisor turns the X-rays over to a courier to deliver to the hearing. On his way, a truck runs the courier off the road and he is seriously injured; the X-rays turn up missing from his car. The supervisor goes to his plant and seizes the control room, demanding television time to expose the whole fraud. At length, the utility's executives have him cut off the air and machine-gunned, not before he has made himself look like a madman and they have contrived another near disaster for the plant.

This film, which has been widely praised, resembles less a documentary than that meretricious type of *roman à clef* in which actual persons, having been sketched with just enough authentic detail to identify them, are then subjected to savage misrepresentation. The touches of authenticity here include an elaborate mock-up of a reactor control room and real technical jargon which the characters sling about with more enthusiasm than accuracy.

The film's master misrepresentation is the notion that it is in the financial interest of an electric utility to ignore a serious malfunction in one of its reactors. Although the utility in question is said to be facing serious cash-flow problems if its reactor is not gotten back in service quickly, in real life, when a reactor is temporarily out of service, the principal cost to the utility is that of replacement electricity. This is a charge borne

⁵The anti-nuclear lobby made prompt and devious use of this incident and the earthquake that followed it. The Clamshell Alliance has issued a broadside falsely alleging that the error had "resulted in earthquake precautions significantly below standards." The broadside also suggests that the occurrence of a minor earthquake of Richter-force 4 somehow disproved estimates of the unlikelihood of the probability of a hundredfold worse one of Richter-force 6.

not by the utility but by its customers, and, accordingly, no threat to corporate greed. What would threaten not merely the health but the existence of the entire nuclear industry would be a catastrophic accident, such as an uncontained meltdown, that posed a potential threat to large numbers of the public. The anti-nuclear activists who have gone far toward crippling the nuclear industry even in the face of its exceptional safety record—a record that remains exceptional after Three Mile Island—could certainly shut it down in the aftermath of such an accident. They will certainly be able to make immense capital out of the much less serious accident that occurred at the Three Mile Island plant near Harrisburg on March 28. Thus the rational self-interest of utility officials—even of such moral monsters as those in *The China Syndrome*—would lead them to be maximally careful, not implausibly reckless.

The picture given in *The China Syndrome* should be compared to the real-life incidents surrounding the NRC's shutdown of five plants over faint doubts as to their earthquake-proofness. In this actual case, it is instructive to note who blew the whistle: not a little band of journalistic heroes, but officers of one of the affected utilities and of the firm which built all five plants.

ALMOST as fantastic as the film's economics is the course of the accidents the film purports to record.

The first of these is, in certain respects, eerily like the Three Mile Island accident, although it is treated with grotesque inaccuracy. It begins with a so-called "turbine trip,"⁶ an event in the non-nuclear part of the power station which makes it necessary to shut down the turbine, the generator, and the reactor. Since the steam circuit which drives the turbine is integral to the system by which the reactor is cooled, the reactor cannot operate unless the turbine is working. The problem is analogous to the overheating that follows when a water pump fails on an automobile engine. In either case, the remedy is to shut off the major source of heat: in the car, this is the engine, in the power plant, the chain reaction.

The sequence by which the reactor is shut off is called a "scram," and consists of inserting neutron-absorbing control rods into the core. This greatly reduces the heat produced in the core, but does not eliminate it, for although the chain reaction is the major source of heat in the reactor, it is not the only one. The fission products in the fuel rods form another. Simple convection through the cooling water is sufficient to maintain safe temperatures in the fuel, so long as the cooling water is in place and the fuel remains safely encased in its alloy tubes. Should the water level fall below a critical point, however, it would quickly boil away and heat would rise sharply in the fuel, which would at length melt. The fuel could melt down through the bottom of the reactor and into the ground.

Someone once jokingly (and very inaccurately) suggested that it could melt all the way through the earth, and this is the basis for the "China Syndrome" of the title.

In the accident the film describes, an unexplained turbine "trip" leads to a computer decision to "scram" the reactor. As this automated process gets under way, there is a sudden indication that water levels in the reactor core are rising dangerously. This very notion is so much nonsense: the reactor, from its outward appearance and the diagram used by its public-relations man, is clearly a pressurized-water type⁷ and would have had no gauges to indicate water level in the core. The shift supervisor agitatedly says that they've got to find where all this extra water is coming from, because the water has gotten almost to the steam pipes. This is another bit of nonsense: there are no steam pipes in the reactor vessel of a pressurized-water reactor.

Suddenly, someone else notes that another indicator shows the water level falling below normal. (This indicator is placed at another location in the control panel, although in real reactors—specifically the Trojan plant in Oregon which the film takes as its model—the two types of indicator are adjacent.) The shift supervisor taps the glass cover of the recording graph, and the stylus falls precipitously. It is never explained how it got above normal before sticking, but the shift supervisor, now dealing with the problem of inadequate coolant, is apparently too busy to wonder about this.

The new problem is even more preposterous than its predecessor. There is only one cause for such a drop in reactor coolant: either a major venting of water from the primary circuit, as happened at Three Mile Island, or a serious leak in the primary cooling circuit, the equivalent of a ruptured water hose in a car. In either case, the cause of the drop in reactor coolant would have been immediately apparent as water and steam gushed into the containment building. The reactor's emergency core cooling system would have sprung into action to replace the lost water, as it did at Three Mile Island. In the fantasy world of the film, the shift supervisor, after being told that the primary ECCS system is down for main-

⁶In technical parlance, a "trip" is the automatic shutdown of a device for whatever reason, whether failure within itself or failure in a related device.

⁷Technical advice for the film came, among other sources, from three nuclear engineers who several years ago, having joined the para-religious and anti-nuclear organization Project Survival, itself a child of the so-called Creative Initiative Foundation, resigned from the General Electric Company. Their experience at GE was with boiling-water reactors, and this may have led them astray. Alternatively, the film's producers may not have realized that the schematic diagram they placed in the hands of the plant's public-relations man, showing a pressurized-water reactor, did not describe the plant as set forth in the script. Or—perhaps most plausibly—they may not have cared much about accuracy.

tenance,⁸ appears to activate a backup ECCS manually, after which action he turns to prayer. Following an unexplained delay, the water level begins rising slowly (the real-life ECCS functions quickly), and the reactor's computer informs a relieved shift supervisor that the scram is complete.

The film treats the *sequelae* of this accident even more unrealistically. When the film was made, a loss-of-coolant accident had never happened in a light-water power reactor. Had such an accident happened, as the film clearly claims it did, it would have caused a sensation. It is instructive to contrast what happens in the film with what happened after Three Mile Island. Not only would the NRC have conducted a lengthy investigation before even attempting to repair what would have been perforce a severely damaged reactor, but anti-nuclear activists would have seized on the accident as the ultimate proof that nuclear power is unsafe. In fantasy-land, however, the NRC conducts a perfunctory investigation and the reactor is returned to service in less than a week.

The second accident is a confused emulation of the first. By now the shift supervisor has seized the control room and is demanding television time to tell the terrible truth about reactor safety. The bad guys start interfering with the security systems guarding the control room—a reasonable action even for good guys, given the hysterical behavior of the man at the controls—and when he realizes this, he threatens to flood the containment with water, and says that if he does, “God help the power company.” The audience is left to speculate as to what horrors the threat entails. In reality, the most a man in the control room could have done would be to spray the containment with water designed to cool it down and counteract the effects of leaking radiation.

Undaunted, the bad guys decide to shut the reactor off without using the control room. Their technical experts tell them that there is a way to do this, which involves bypassing a variety of connections in the bowels of the reactor. Their minions repair thither, attempting to scram the reactor behind the shift supervisor's back. After an hour's effort, they succeed. (This sequence, too, is fantasy: when I asked a shift supervisor at a very similar reactor how hard it would be to scram his reactor without access to the control room, he replied that he could think of about a dozen ways right off, of which the easiest would be to disconnect the generator from the grid by tripping the main circuit breakers of the distribution system. This could be done in a few seconds and a scram would follow.)

In the film, when the villains finally succeed, another accident begins, this one heralded by a shaking of the control room and containment that would be unlikely even in a major earthquake, and which could not be caused by a loss-of-coolant accident, followed by the failure of a

small pipe connected to what is presumably a steam generator.⁹ There is a loss of coolant and after appropriate nail-biting, the reactor scrams and the China Syndrome is once more postponed. This chain of events corresponds to no known or technically envisionable reactor accident: it appears to have been concocted for its dramatic effect alone.

YET even if we were to concede that Hollywood showing a reactor accident in 1979 is no more interested in technical accuracy than Hollywood in 1939 showing the court of Elizabeth I, there are other and more meretricious flaws in this film, extending well beyond the technicalities of reactor operation.

One non-nuclear example is its bizarre picture of television news, which is presented as being more reticent toward prompt publication than literary historians. The spectacle of a station manager refusing to run sensational footage “until we know exactly what this means” is absurdly counter to the way television works, as is the suggestion that television stations are timorously unwilling to run the risks of libel actions from public corporations in a world in which such actions have been effectively ruled out.¹⁰

Another serious distortion is apparent in the film's treatment of plant security. We see a total of three security guards, two of whom are elderly buffers at the gate, drawn from Central Casting's sheriff's-deputy pool. The other is a wimpy guard in the control room itself whose general alertness is insufficient to keep him from being disarmed by a stock Jack Lemmon character. This picture, as anyone who has visited a reactor can testify, is very far from the truth. There are formidable-looking armed guards everywhere, and the security checks even for friendly visitors seem to be derived from practice at maximum-security prisons. These facts, if represented, would not have been helpful to the film's message. If reality embarrasses the received view among anti-nuclearists that reactors are easily seized by terrorists, well, so much the worse for reality.

Much more serious is the film's flagrant misrepresentation of the licensing process. Early on, the public-relations man says that the utility hopes to put its new reactor on line shortly. “We're having

⁸Operating with an entire ECCS system out of commission would have been a very serious violation of NRC rules. The NRC is threatening to revoke the operating license for Three Mile Island for a somewhat less serious offense, but in the film it confines itself to a mild remonstrance.

⁹I say “presumably” advisedly; the hodgepodge of locations used in the film makes it hard to judge just what is really being represented. The turbine room is that of a smaller oil-fired plant; the “steam generator” is reported to be a bit of plumbing in a Southern California hydro-power plant, and is not very convincing.

¹⁰Whatever the Herbert decision may mean for the future of the libel law, it will not alter the basic standard of proof: it would have been necessary for the utility to prove that the station had broadcast a defamatory accusation with the knowledge that it was false.

the licensing hearings next week," he notes. As represented in the film, the "licensing hearings" consist of citizens addressing a panel of what are presumably NRC commissioners or their deputies.

One pro-nuclear witness appears: identified in an interview outside the hearing as a health physicist, he tells the television audience that he believes the new plant should be licensed because *any* large source of energy should be licensed; that is apparently the extent of the case for nuclear power. Once before the panel, he announces his special concern with the problem of radioactive waste. He then states the view that he has come to oppose: the conventional claim that we have no idea of how to deal with the problem of waste storage, a claim already made by two other characters in the film. The camera then leaves him and does not return until he has finished his testimony. The film thus neatly censors the fact that solutions for radioactive-waste storage have already been found.¹¹ This sleazy bit of manipulation is necessary in order to leave unchallenged one of the central myths of the anti-nuclear movement. There is in this context a pathetic irony to Jane Fonda's claim that by withdrawing its sponsorship from a program she appeared on, General Electric denied her freedom of expression.

We see two anti-nuclear testimonies, both theatrical exercises. In the first, a group of mothers hold up pictures of their children—who presumably must be protected from nuclear power—while one of their number reads names and ages. In another, a group of people wearing gags stands before the tribunal while a young man says that since in all the licensing hearings conducted heretofore the NRC has never denied a license, there is no point in talking. He then gags himself and his group waits until their five minutes are up.

The film thus puts forth an unambiguous account of how nuclear plants are licensed: in brief *pro forma* hearings in which the NRC ignores all critical testimony, which testimony has in any event been reduced to upper-middle-class guerrilla theater. The truth is of course very different: nuclear reactors are subject not only to federal but usually to state and local licensing arrangements. The federal requirements are not merely those of the NRC, but also of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The NRC requires licenses not only for operation, but also for the construction, of nuclear power plants. The EPA requires a massive environmental-impact statement; state requirements vary, with California's being as tough as or tougher than the federal standards. The total number of licenses and permits can exceed 100, and it is possible for a plant to lose ground during the licensing process as governments impose new requirements faster than old ones are met. Decisions made by administrative bodies can be taken into the courts by so-called "intervenor." A reactor put on line in 1979 will have gone through a licensing process lasting not a few days but years. Typically, a construction license is granted two

years after application, and typically, a utility applies for an operating license four years before it expects to be able to operate. The total time between a decision to build a nuclear power plant and the generation of electricity is now over twelve years. During this period, the design and construction of the plant will have undergone repeated modification in response to the objections of nuclear opponents. Indeed, a study by a group at the Harvard Business School and MIT concludes that delay in the licensing period is the single most important cause in increasing the cost of nuclear plants.

There is an unpleasant term for what the film does in this respect, but its unpleasantness should be no bar to its use: the film lies. It lies, moreover, to the public, and on an issue of great consequence.

BUT even this does not exhaust the mendacity of *The China Syndrome*. It shows the nuclear industry as being on two occasions quite willing to commit murder in order to suppress inconvenient facts. On the second occasion, the character played by Jack Lemmon is machine-gunned to death by a county sheriff's SWAT team. Perhaps in the inflamed imaginations of those who produced this film, such events are possible; given their comic-book view of businessmen, they may just have thought they were depicting something that could happen.

The first murder (which is only attempted) is rather different: it is smirkingly based on an actual case, and has been distorted in a fashion that makes clear the way in which the film's perpetrators have "improved" reality whenever it was insufficiently horrific for their ideological purposes.

The attempted assassination is modeled on the anti-nuclear movement's version of the death of Karen Silkwood.¹² Silkwood, a technician at a Kerr-McGee plutonium-processing plant in Oklahoma, died in November 1974 when her car went off the road and into a culvert. At the time she was on the way to an interview with a union official and a *New York Times* reporter and she was allegedly carrying documents detailing safety violations at the plant. The orthodox anti-nuclear

¹¹In the summer of 1978, France began operating a full-scale commercial plant for the vitrification of waste; a German depository is far along in development. Indeed, in most of the world, solutions to the waste problem are being implemented. It is only in America that political considerations inhibit technical progress in this area. Even the most recent anti-nuclear books suppress this fact; this cover-up is the major moral scandal of the movement.

¹²The issue in the current trial in Oklahoma is whether Silkwood suffered occupational plutonium poisoning as a result of negligence in the operation of the plant where she worked. This issue, still *sub judice*, and on which I have no informed opinion, should be distinguished from the widespread claim that Silkwood's employers had her murdered. Should it appear that Kerr-McGee was negligent in the operation of its plant, the remedy will be stricter monitoring of the occupational-safety law, rather than a renunciation of nuclear power.

view is, of course, that she was forced off the road by agents of darkness, presumably in the service of her employers.

This view of her death (which is the only view reported by the media) omits several key facts: the dents on the back of her car—allegedly from a second car that forced her off the road—were not noticed until some days following the accident, after the car had been pulled out of the ditch from the rear; her blood was found to contain the widely abused drug methaqualone, in a concentration just between therapeutic and lethal levels; two weeks before the fatal accident, she had dozed off at the wheel and run her car into a ditch on the highway; and, finally, her associates testified to the Oklahoma state police that she left on the final drive exhausted and, in their opinion, in no condition to drive.

None of these facts is built into the film's emulation. And there is a further improvement on the evidence. The altered X-rays in the *Silkwood* case, unlike those in the film, did not involve misrepresentations of welds. Rather, an analyst had touched up scratches in the background of otherwise usable negatives instead of reshooting them; there was no falsification of evidence about the welds themselves. Improper activity, to be sure, but a far cry from passing off an X-ray of one weld as an X-ray of many.

The China Syndrome is, in sum, a consistent act of fabrication. It is a slick disaster film, generally superior to the run of such films because of the performances of actors apparently willing to prostitute great talents to bamboozle the American people. This is, of course, not behavior substantially different from what we have been led to expect from Hollywood. Who ever expected Tinseltown to cover complex and highly politicized issues with either penetration or accuracy? But there is a real danger that Miss Fonda and her associates will be widely regarded as heroic purveyors of a truth suppressed by other media types who are motivated by a base desire for money.¹⁸

Jane Fonda, Jack Lemmon, and Michael Douglas, at any rate, will be able to giggle all the way to the bank. If they are wise, it will be a Swiss bank, for Switzerland pursues a rational energy policy, and when the lights begin going out in America, even in Southern California, adequately provident anti-nuclearists can opt for a comfortable exile among the atomic gnomes of Zurich.

II

THIS (with minor modifications) might I have finished a round-up of recent nuclear news on March 27, 1979. Now, in the calendar of anti-nuclear activism, March 28 is being touted as the watershed: Before and After Three Mile Island. But as it happens, although much *may* change as a result of Three Mile Island, not much *should*, and almost nothing in the directions proposed by the anti-nuclear lobby.

It might be thought that the accident at Three Mile Island had been covered so thoroughly that there would be no need to provide an account of the bare facts. But the coverage was so thorough, especially in interpretative matters, that a bare chronology is instructive by contrast.

What follows is adapted from a preliminary chronology issued by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. In order to understand it, it is necessary to keep in mind a few facts about the construction of the reactor at Three Mile Island.

The reactor is of the pressurized-water type, in which cooling water is handled in two separate circuits. The primary circuit, which is kept at pressure sufficient to prevent boiling even at 650 F., takes water to the reactor core, where it is heated, and thence to a sort of boiler called a steam generator where it makes thermal—but not physical—contact with the secondary circuit, giving up its heat to it. It is then pumped back to the reactor core. Water in the primary circuit becomes slightly radioactive as neutrons in the core alter occasional atoms of hydrogen and of various trace impurities. The secondary-circuit water, which is not pressurized and hence can boil, goes—in the form of steam—from the steam generator to the turbine and thence to the condenser, where it is cooled back to water. It is then pumped back to the steam generator to be reheated again.

As can be seen, taken together, the two circuits have a dual function. They are at once cooling devices and heating devices, and the turbine is a part of the cooling system for the core as well as a source of energy to turn the generator. Any interruption in any part of either circuit raises an immediate problem with regard to both of these functions.

On March 28, about 4 A.M., an incident occurred in the secondary (or non-nuclear) circuit of Three Mile Island unit #2. A main feedwater pump, which has the job of pumping water from the condenser back into the steam generator, tripped. Immediately, the turbine and its associated generator were automatically stopped. Pressure began to rise in the primary system, and, as designed, a valve automatically opened to relieve pressure. But pressure rose enough so that another automatic system instantly shut down the reactor by inserting its control rods. Thus far, approximately thirty seconds into the accident, everything happened as planned. From this point on, the chain reaction was terminated, and all the heat left in the core derived from the decay of highly radioactive fission products within the fuel rods.

This heat, amounting to about less than 1 per

¹⁸At the May 6 demonstration in Washington, in the course of flogging the film, which she claimed to be about greed, Miss Fonda warranted its literal accuracy. George F. Will, *Newsweek*, April 2, has a neat demonstration of the manner in which *The China Syndrome* really is about greed. See also Richard Grenier's piece, beginning on p. 67 of this issue.

cent of the total output of the reactor, must nevertheless be removed from the core in order to avoid damage to the fuel. To do this, the primary circuit continues to carry the heat to the steam generator, where it must be transferred to the secondary circuit and carried away to the condenser even if the turbine has been turned off. To accomplish this end, reactors are equipped with auxiliary feedwater systems which are designed to supply water to the steam generator after a turbine trip. Thirty seconds after the original failure, the three auxiliary feedwater pumps were started up but failed to supply water to the steam generator because their discharge valves were closed.

A minute into the accident, the steam generators were running short of water. Moreover, the pressure-relief valve in the primary circuit automatically opened when the pressure exceeded 2,255 pounds a square inch but failed to close again when the pressure fell within operating bounds. The pressure continued to drop, and two minutes into the accident, the ECCS automatically injected water into the primary system. Shortly thereafter, the water level in the pressurizer—the part of the primary circuit that regulates pressure—began to register very high levels, actually going off the scale. The operator then turned off the ECCS, as he was supposed to have done with such an indication.

Eight minutes into the accident, the operator opened the discharge valves of the auxiliary feedwater pumps, and water began to be supplied once again to the steam generators. Three minutes later, he restarted the ECCS and the pressurizer level came back on scale. At this point, the accident was eleven minutes into its course.

Four minutes later, the failure of the relief valve to close led to a leak in the tank to which it drained, and radioactive water flooded into the containment building. This was eventually pumped automatically into an auxiliary building, leading to some release of radiation outside the plant.

During the second hour of the accident, the operator turned off the pumps circulating the primary coolant. Following upon this action, the temperature in the core began to rise sharply. For the next several hours, cooling in the core was inadequate to prevent fuel damage, which is presently estimated to have occurred, in greater or lesser degree, to about half the fuel. It is clear that the top of the core was uncovered; estimates of how long range from two to fifteen hours.

Once cooling water had been restored, the course of the accident consisted in trying to find ways to bring the reactor to the state known as cold shutdown, in which the coolant temperature falls below the boiling point and convection currents in the unpressurized coolant are sufficient to carry off the decay heat from the core.

A detailed chronology shows a steady alternation of ups and downs toward this end, one of which received wide publicity. The overheating of the core generated hydrogen, which accumu-

lated in the reactor-pressure vessel, hampering further cooling. The bubble first appears in the NRC chronology on March 30; by April 2, it was being significantly reduced in size, and by April 5 seems to have become negligible.

Also highly publicized during the early days of the accident were various releases of radioactive material into the atmosphere. Some of these were inadvertent, and some were deliberate. Their existence, and the possibility of more of them, led to the recommended evacuation of pregnant women and small children from the immediate vicinity of the reactor.

THESE are, in essence, the salient non-controversial elements of what happened at Three Mile Island. If one reads them in their most detailed form, the NRC's "Immediate Preliminary Notice" documents—comparatively undigested summaries of events and data prepared in the first instance for the commissioners themselves and senior NRC staff, and then for the media—one is struck by the fact that the whole affair seems a good deal drier and less panic-stricken than the press reports made out.¹⁴ As it happens, there is good reason for this.

¹⁴One exception to the general tenor of press coverage was the normally sensational *National Enquirer*, which ran an anti-sensational story holding that the whole problem having been handled quickly and calmly by the professionals, the very idea of a crisis was a hoax. The tone of this account, although making the event seem more routine than it was, was more accurate than most treatments. The *Enquirer* also suggested strongly that the accident was the result of sabotage. Comment on this notion will have to defer to the various investigations now under way. The press in general was restrained in reporting a bit of overseas nuclear news: Three Mile Island apparently induced the Soviets to become more confiding about their own nuclear program. A congressional delegation was told that, yes, there had been some accidents in Soviet reactors, but none that harmed the public. (An earlier American group had been told that the absence of an anti-nuclear movement in the Soviet Union was attributable to the superior safety of the People's Reactors.) Similar claims were made about the safety of Soviet reactors on this occasion, all dutifully reported in the press. What was not generally reported was that the vast majority of Soviet reactors have no containments. Had a Three Mile Island-type accident happened at one of these uncontained reactors, there would almost certainly have been very serious releases of radioactivity. Since radioactivity notoriously does not stop at national borders, the containment of all Soviet reactors would be an appropriate goal for anti-nuclear activists.

The press was also more restrained in reporting other sorts of disasters. The weeks following the accident at Three Mile Island were crowded with man-made and natural disasters. On two occasions, accidents involving industrial chemicals forced widespread evacuations in the United States. There were very serious floods and a major tornado in this country, a major earthquake in Yugoslavia, and a major volcanic eruption in the Caribbean. In all these, many thousands of people were threatened with death, and many more thousands evacuated from their homes. These events were routinely reported in the press. Had anyone pointed out that they posed greater threats than Three Mile Island, the anti-nuclear lobby would no doubt have replied that even if they did, one good disaster does not deserve another. True: but on the other hand, there is no upside, as the cost-benefit analysts put it, to an earthquake or a flood.

III

THE single most important interpretative question about Three Mile Island concerns the seriousness of the accident. Did we, as is said with great regularity, come very near to a meltdown?

Here one must distinguish between, on the one hand, melting of fuel cladding and of some fuel, and on the other the phenomenon of "meltdown," that is, an uncontrollable syndrome in which all the fuel in the reactor core melts and as a semi-liquid mass generates enough heat to go through the bottom of the reactor vessel and the containment building. This process, once it starts, is irreversible. There is no such thing as a "partial meltdown," although one is often alleged to have happened at an accident near Detroit in 1966, and the same thing is likely to be asserted of Three Mile Island.

For a meltdown to occur, it is necessary for some of the fuel itself to melt. This requires a temperature of approximately 5000 F. How near did we come to this temperature in the fuel at Three Mile Island? We never got nearer than about 2000 F. This fact is a better gauge than all the vague press reports of "possibilities," and certainly better than the bogus report which circulated widely on March 31 to the effect that the reactor bubble was expanding rapidly and that an explosion or a meltdown was likely within forty-eight hours.

Although it is early for more than a tentative discussion, it appears that, if anything, Three Mile Island makes meltdowns seem *less* likely than we had thought. It had been widely assumed that reactor cores could not be uncovered for more than a few minutes without starting a meltdown. This was the message of the "experts" in *The China Syndrome*, and yet the Three Mile Island core was uncovered for a great deal longer than a few minutes. As I have already indicated, estimates range from two to fifteen hours.¹⁵

Two nuclear engineers of my acquaintance who spent some time at Three Mile Island during the accident have suggested that this superficially surprising turn of events is to be explained by the cooling effects of steam. That is, the "uncovered" core is in fact covered by steam and this, although a less effective conductor than water, carried away enough decay heat to prevent further damage. The presence of steam in a depressurized reactor vessel is not, of course, a fluke, but something that would occur in any similar situation.

Another reasonable question is, How near did we come at Three Mile Island to a hydrogen explosion? With regard to hydrogen explosions in the atmosphere of the containment building, it seems clear that we had such an explosion: the NRC explains a sharp rise in containment pressure the afternoon of March 28—otherwise unexplainable—as the result of a small hydrogen explosion. It should be noted that the explosion was

neither heard nor felt, and could only be inferred on the basis of sensitive recording instruments.

As to the possibility of an explosion of the hydrogen bubble within the reactor pressure vessel, it is clear that there was never enough oxygen available, whatever the hydrogen supply, to allow for a hydrogen fire, let alone an explosion; and while the possibility of such an explosion was splendidly *frisson*-making for the media, we never even headed in its direction, let alone got near it.

"Well then," I can imagine a nuclear opponent saying, "suppose we concede that we didn't get very close to a worse accident. What we had is quite had enough, because there were many releases of radiation, and there is no safe level of radiation. There *was* a death toll at Three Mile Island, but it won't show up for twenty years, in the form of an increased cancer rate in the area."

There are a number of ways to evaluate the magnitude of the radiation releases. One is to consider the maximum exposure the most exposed member of the public might have gotten. This, according to NRC figures, amounted to 90 millirems. That is the equivalent of two chest X-rays. It is also a little less than the difference between the annual natural or "background" exposure in New Orleans and Denver. That needs to be appreciated: a New Orleansian offered a choice between a year in Denver or five days, starting March 28, on the banks of the Susquehanna staring at Three Mile Island, would, on radiological grounds at least, have been well advised to spend the time in Pennsylvania. The average exposure to persons living within 50 miles of the reactor was 1.75 millirems. This is little more than the exposure each of them gets each year from color television.¹⁶

In announcing this figure, which represents a doubling of the original estimate, HEW Secretary Califano noted that this rate of exposure to two million people would probably produce one death from cancer. He also noted that certain higher and highly controversial figures for the effects of low-level radiation would predict as many as ten deaths. These figures, he said, although statistically tiny, represented real people for whom they

¹⁵Wire-service reports of the April 27 attainment of shutdown at Three Mile Island continue to speak of an uncovered core not as an actual event, but as a horrible threat posed by the hydrogen bubble, from which we were mysteriously saved.

¹⁶To a certain extent, nuclear energy has become a victim of its own exceptional concern with safety. The NRC sets highly conservative limits for radiation release which in practice reactors never come near. When, in an accident, a reactor emits radiation that exceeds these conservative limits even slightly and temporarily, it is bruited about that safety standards have been violated and there must be danger. This is an accurate conclusion only when the safety standards are set as laxly as possible, rather than as tightly as possible, as is the case in fact. It is as if a bank promised to calculate interest on savings accounts to the fifteenth decimal place before rounding off, and a depositor interpreted a minor error in the twelfth place as evidence that he was being robbed blind.

would be grim reality. Just so; and the same is true for deaths caused by alternative energy sources. Even the estimate of ten deaths is no more than the occupational death toll owing to the operation of a Three Mile Island-sized coal plant during a single year. These deaths—which are of actual people—do not get the same publicity accorded to projected deaths from nuclear energy. In their thousands, they are reported not en masse on front pages but one by one in the obituary columns.

There is another accurate measure of radiation exposure: the NRC set up a whole-body radiation scanner in Middletown and offered to test anyone who wished to be tested for increased body radiation. Of some 750 individuals, *none* showed radiation levels above normal.

Still another measure is the contamination of milk by radioiodine. The highest reading in milk in the area around Three Mile Island was some 40 picocuries per liter. This is one-tenth of the reading permitted by the reactor license for routine operation, and 3 per cent of the level at which the Food and Drug Administration recommends placing cattle on stored feed. A wide variety of other samplings—of vegetables, soil, air, and water—showed no radiation above normal. Finally, even with the discharge of some mildly radioactive water into the Susquehanna, the plant will be well within its quarterly limits for discharge into the river.

Nuclear opponents who claim that no level of radiation, even the tiniest, is without adverse health effects,¹⁷ and that accordingly there will inevitably be many cases of cancer as a result of Three Mile Island, cite such research as that of Ernest Sternglass purporting to prove, *inter alia*, that cancer increased in towns around the Millstone Point reactor in Connecticut after it went into operation. Sternglass, whose dubious status as a public-health authority has been given a new lease on life by Three Mile Island, “demonstrated” by selecting one year each—before and after the activation of the plant. He did not note what was evident from his data, that by picking another pair of years one could show that the Millstone plant cures cancer, or that when one integrates—as any tyro statistician knows one should—data for five years before and five years after the start of the reactor, any statistical correlation between the reactor and cancer disappears. For such tactics it is hardly surprising that Sternglass should have been rebuked by his professional organization. Similarly dubious tactics have been used by other “scientists” in opposition to nuclear energy.

BY JUNE of this year, the National Academy of Sciences will have issued two reports that will probably be used to argue that my view here is Pollyannaish. One deals with the health effects of radiation generally, and the other with nuclear power specifically. The first

estimates that some 200,000 people now alive will develop cancer as a result of radiation exposure (from all sources, including rocks and dental X-rays), and the second that between 1975 and 2000 some 2,000 people will develop cancer as a result of exposure to radiation from nuclear energy.

Only the nuclear-energy report is relevant here. Even if the 2,000 figure is accurate, that works out to an average of 80 persons a year. This at present is a little over one person per operating reactor. When all reactors now in construction are on line, 80 cancer cases a year per reactor would be less than half a person a year. Even this is too many, according to one anti-nuclear extremist; she is suing to force the closure of all nuclear plants on the ground that for public policy to envision a single death from nuclear power is to commit legalized murder.¹⁸

Such a position is tenable only with the aid of a grossly sentimental view that, by ignoring alternatives, forces everyone else to jump off the counter next to the stove and into the fire. For, at a very conservative estimate, a 1,000-megawatt coal-fired plant kills 30 people a year; over the twenty-five-year span covered in the NAS study, three such plants would kill as many people as the study estimates for the entire nuclear industry, present and future. A less conservative estimate is that such a coal plant kills 110 people a year; on that estimate, a *single* coal-fired plant would kill *more* people over twenty-five years than the entire nuclear-power industry.¹⁹

Nuclear critics are also fond of claiming that since cancer caused by radiation takes years to

¹⁷This is a game at which two can play, although pro-nuclearites have not gotten involved in it. But it is tempting: I might claim that some of the elements used in photovoltaic solar cells have a minor composition of radioactive isotopes, and that, accordingly, when the roofs of America are all covered with photovoltaic collectors, the increased radiation must inevitably result in cancer deaths; following the most extreme estimates of the danger of minor radiation, these could be claimed to be substantial in number. The rational response from the anti-nuclear lobby would be to point out that the amount of radiation involved is tiny. The lobby could be hoist with its own petard by quoting its own reiterated claim that *no* amount of radiation is safe and *all* radiation kills.

¹⁸At the May 6 rally, John Gofman, a leading nuclear opponent, made this argument quite explicitly, calling nuclear power “unconstitutional” because it licenses murder. His constitutional standards are very much lower for coal.

¹⁹The New York Times account of the two reports gave deeply buried mention to the fact that the cancer deaths from nuclear power might be compared to those caused by the alternative, but specifically mentions only the death toll among miners, which is a small part of the total. Moreover, the Times story has a curious label for the question of “public-health tradeoffs of nuclear versus coal-fired plants.” It calls it an “esoteric” issue. This is probably a fair measure of educated ignorance on the topic, but the question is not esoteric, involving as it does the routine death by cancer and respiratory diseases of thousands of Americans each year. It is about as esoteric as the question of whether the exiguous death rate from appendectomies ought to be compared with the death rate from leaving acute appendicitis untreated.

develop, we will not know for a generation how many victims there were at Three Mile Island. As it happens, we have good reason to believe that there will be none even in twenty years. An accident at a plutonium-production reactor at Windscale in northwest England in 1957 was by any objective measure very much worse than Three Mile Island in terms of radiation release. Milk was confiscated in the most contaminated areas for as long as forty-four days. Twenty-two years later, no pattern of increased cancer has been attributed to this accident.

It is, however, not very likely that many convinced nuclear critics will be swayed by such demonstrations, for many people react irrationally to radiation. Because radiation is invisible, intangible, tasteless, odorless, and silent, and because it is measured in unfamiliar units that are themselves not always easy to understand, many people see it as mysterious, something to avoid at all costs, like evil. For people with a need to believe in the devil in an unbedeviled world, radiation—as popularly misunderstood—is the next best thing.

But as a matter of fact, radiation is not really mysterious: we know a good deal more about it than, say, the carcinogens in coal smoke, because we have studied it longer and more intensively. And we can measure it with great precision and extraordinary sensitivity. We can, for example, detect radioiodine in milk at a concentration of 10 *trillionths* of a curie per liter, which is 1/120 of the concentration the FDA treats as worth taking precautions about.²⁰

Writing in these pages nearly two years ago, I said that "nuclear reactors, routinely operated, are among the most negligible emitters of radiation, and thus among the most negligible causes of radiation." That statement applies with the same force to the Three Mile Island reactor, operated not routinely but in the crisis of a damaging accident.²¹

For it was certainly a damaging accident; any sequence capable of putting a reactor out of action for more than a year is that. But it was not, as one now hears it called on every hand, "the accident they told us couldn't happen." As often as one sees and hears this sort of thing, one never sees or hears an example of anyone claiming that major nuclear accidents are impossible.

The reason is simple enough: no one makes such claims. It is certainly not the claim of the Rasmussen Report. What that report says is that a catastrophic accident is extremely unlikely. Three Mile Island does not disprove this prediction, for it was not a catastrophic accident, or anything even close to one. Even had it been, it would not have disproved the prediction. By definition, if an event is said to be extremely unlikely, it is also said to be possible. No probability estimate can ever be disproved by a single occurrence. The charge that supporters of nuclear energy have claimed that an accident that has happened could never happen, and that therefore

they have been lying, is thus a blend of the Straw Man and the Big Lie.

THE fact of the matter is that, taken as a whole, the accident at Three Mile Island generally confirms what we have been told about nuclear power. Where it does change our understanding, it not only suggests ways we can improve nuclear safety, but also that we have in some respects underestimated the degree of the safety we have already attained.

There was certainly failure of equipment; there was apparently operation of the plant in ways that did not conform to its legally mandated technical specifications; and there is substantial reason to suspect operator error. These matters will be sorted out in the months to come in a plethora of investigations. But one can say at this point that the system and its operators averted any injuries to the public or damage to its property. That, after all, is what the system and its operators are supposed to do. That is what they did.

Even if there had been a substantially more serious accident, it would have been necessary to consider it in perspective. As it is, the generation of replacement electricity in the three-state power pool (Pennsylvania, Maryland, and New Jersey) will shift sources from 46 per cent to 50 per cent coal-fired. That change will have inevitable health effects as sulfur dioxide and other pollutants increase in the three-state area; there will indeed be victims of Three Mile Island, but they will be victims of a temporarily lessened dependence on nuclear power. The closing of Three Mile Island is in effect a local moratorium on nuclear power; one study of a similar moratorium, that enforced by the Browns Ferry fire in 1975, estimates that as many as 15 miners and between 60 and 200 members of the general public will have been killed as a result of the increased coal burning it made necessary. It will not be possible to make similar

²⁰Nuclear energy is not the only area in which laymen have trouble appreciating the precision and quantifiability of technology. Before the first Concorde landed in New York, some people turned to civil disobedience in order to block what they "knew" would be an overnoisy airplane. In the event, it turned out to operate within the same standards as subsonic jets. A British engineer who had accompanied the flight was asked on television whether he was surprised that the plane had passed the test. "No," he answered. "We don't earn our pay by doing our sums wrong."

²¹In the train of the accident at Three Mile Island, radiation stories purportedly related to it, involving nuclear weapons, began cropping up in the press. A Senate hearing ventilated claims that persons living in Utah and Nevada had developed cancer as a consequence of atmospheric bomb tests, and there were reports that soldiers who were first into Nagasaki have developed lurid radiation-related diseases. Whatever the facts in these cases, they do not point to any conclusions about Three Mile Island, for bomb explosions involve much greater radiation releases than those in this accident. The bomb stories are belated evidence rather for the costs of atmospheric testing and for failure of omniscience about radiation in the first weeks of the atomic age.

calculations about Three Mile Island until we know how long it will be out of action, but the cost will not be small in any case.²²

It is still early to have more than a tentative opinion about what changes, if any, we should make in the operation of nuclear plants as a result of Three Mile Island. But it is hard to avoid the conclusion that it is mechanically too easy to operate a plant in defiance of elementary safety regulations. A nuclear engineer of my acquaintance who was at Three Mile Island during the crisis was not receptive to my suggestion that the mandated safety systems ought to be interlocked with the control rods of the reactor so that illegal operation would become physically impossible. There were, he said, imaginable occasions in which the defeat of such interlocks might be desirable, and he could envision accidents caused, rather than prevented, by such interlocks. With my milder suggestion that a klaxon sound sharply during illegal operation and that a record, equivalent to the in-flight recorder of an airplane, be kept and inspected by the NRC, he was in agreement. (Although he was pretty well convinced that the accident would have proceeded as much as it did even had the auxiliary feedwater valves not been closed, he hoped that the operating utility's license would be lifted and it be made to prove fit to run a reactor all over again, if only *pour encourager les autres*.)

One thing we certainly need to do is to eschew the temptation to load nuclear plants with new regulations simply for the sake of regulation. Despite the simplistic—at best—view of *The China Syndrome*, nuclear-safety standards and procedures for enforcing them are already highly complex. Let me be even more audacious: licensing reform is overdue and should be carried out even in the political backwash of Three Mile Island. A long licensing process is not necessarily more demanding than a short one, any more than a longer examination is tougher than a short one.

Much of the expense of the present licensing process derives from uncertainties. That is, if it takes two years to get a construction permit, that means one cannot start ordering parts until two years after one decides to build a plant. Since reactor vessels can take as long as 5½ years to deliver after order, that pushes the start of assembling the nuclear steam supply system 7½ years past a decision to build. It is no wonder under these conditions that total lead time for a reactor is now 12 years. But if, for example, it were possible to get NRC approval for a standard reactor design, or designs for certain specified types of sites, much of the construction permit delay would be saved and the eventual cost of the reactor reduced.

As an example of present-day uncertainties, consider the case of two reactors built in the Northeast. Both were ordered in the spring of 1969, within a month of each other. One secured its construction permit a little less than two years

after first entering the regulatory process. It loaded its fuel in August 1975, and has passed almost three years earning revenue against its final cost of \$434 million. The other plant required over four years for its construction permit, and is not yet operating. It is estimated to start operation in the spring of next year. Not until then will it begin earning its estimated final cost of \$1.2 billion.

This is not the only sort of delay exacted by the regulatory process: one utility which has built four nuclear power stations reports that its first plant received a construction permit a year after application; the fourth plant took nearly four. In licensing the first plant, the NRC asked 138 formal questions of the utility; in licensing the fourth, 2,189. And these figures, it should be realized, reflect only the construction-permit process. The issuance of an operating permit is a separate process, and can take longer.

A rationalized licensing procedure could at one and the same time impose tougher standards on the owners of nuclear plants and impose fewer costs on their customers in order to meet those standards.

IV

PERHAPS a more serious question than what we *should* learn from Three Mile Island is what we *will* learn from it. Specifically, will we learn that we must either hamstring or shut down the nuclear industry entirely?

It should be understood in this connection that to speak of a total moratorium, as do gross irresponsibles like Ralph Nader, is to advocate national folly. A recent study by the Institute for Energy Analysis of the Oak Ridge Associated Universities estimates the direct annual economic cost of what might be called a modified limited moratorium (no new construction starts after 1980, continued operation of all reactors on line by 1985) as 1 per cent of the GNP. That would be, in current terms, something like \$20 billion a year. This, of course, is only the dollar cost. Such a moratorium would increase the principal pollutants from coal plants by 20 per cent, and, by any of the varying estimates of deaths from coal, that means thousands more deaths each year.

However, as is well known, nations sometimes pursue courses of gross folly. What is the likelihood of our doing so with regard to nuclear energy? The early evidence is mixed. A number of polls show Americans in various areas, including central Pennsylvania, still supportive of nuclear energy. The people of Austin, Texas, voted just

²²Evidence accumulates that the health effects of nuclear energy are trivial. Last year, a panel of the AMA found that the effects of burning coal were several hundred times worse than those of "burning" uranium. A Canadian study summarized in *Science*, February 23, 1979, holds that nuclear power is safer than all forms except natural gas. *Science* (May 1) has a major criticism of the study; should this prove valid, the study would still show nuclear among the safest sources of power.

after the accident to continue their city's participation in the building of a nuclear plant. On the other hand, the Swedish Social Democratic party, thrown out of office two years ago because of its strong pro-nuclear stand, has just decided to contest next fall's election on an anti-nuclear platform, possibly because the people of Sweden are now anti-nuclear 2 to 1.

The anti-nuclear movement is certainly heartened by the "disaster," even if it wasn't a really useful major catastrophe. The Clamshell Alliance says that it has been forced, by new business generated by Jane Fonda and Metropolitan Edison, to answer requests with form letters. All over the country, nuclear groups previously a little disheartened by the horrifying suspicion that the waste problem might actually be solved, have taken on fresh life.²³

Fresh life for that movement tends toward political and economic danger for the country and death for many of its people. It is worth remembering that the steam engine and the railroad were originally very dangerous bits of technology indeed. Boilers blew up with dismaying regularity, railroad bridges collapsed, trains ran into each other, steamships rammed icebergs. The 19th century saw thousands upon thousands of Americans martyred by steam and its peripheral devices. In 1838 alone, steam explosions killed 500 people in this country, a death rate equivalent to more than 7,000 currently.

Had there been a Ralph Nader operating in those days, one presumes he would have called for a moratorium on steam engines. Suppose he had succeeded? With luck, after a few decades, Europeans might have made the steam engine safe for use in America. The moratorium would have prevented the deaths of some thousands in steam explosions and assured the deaths of many thousands more through a halt to the Industrial Revolution.

But suppose there had been a global Nader who managed to suppress the steam engine everywhere. The cost in avoidable human fatalities would now be in the hundreds of millions. The long-term cost would be as long as the human race continued believing that a hundred should

die at the hands of the devil it knew not so that one should escape death at the hands of the devil it knew.

And that, in a conditional sort of way, is the final lesson of Three Mile Island. I say this as one who lives fairly close to one reactor now, and who will live close to three, if the Seabrook plants are built. As I hope they will be.

²³Just before the accident occurred, anti-nuclear activists already appeared to be escalating their activities. The Clamshell Alliance made an unsuccessful attempt to prevent delivery of the pressure vessel to the Seabrook plant, and activists in Boston had demonstrated their responsibility by plastering the city with authentic-appearing notices of a bogus planned mass evacuation of the greater Boston area. It is distressing to reflect that the people who carried out this vicious fraud probably regarded themselves as exceedingly virtuous in doing so.

The first fruit of Three Mile Island for the movement was the May 6 rally, where attendance has been estimated at between 65,000 and 125,000. In a display of sustained mendacity perhaps never equaled before so large an audience, one anti-nuclear demagogue after another called for an immediate shut-down of all nuclear plants, none mentioning the disastrous economic and health costs entailed in a dramatically increased dependence on fossil fuels. Although some of the audience looked as if they had been demonstrating ever since A. Mitchell Palmer's Red raids in the 20's, the great majority appeared too young to have been responsible for ending the war in Vietnam.

Perhaps the most interesting phenomenon at the rally was the skill with which such "scientific" opponents as John Gofman and Barry Commoner out-demagogued the politicians themselves, Jerry Brown and Bella Abzug included. Perhaps predictably, the most sensible and original remarks were made by Dick Gregory, who seemed by comparison only a virtuous eccentric fallen in with a conclave of snake-oil salesmen.

A second generation of anti-nuclear books also seemed to be on the way just before Three Mile Island. One of these, *No Nukes*, by Anna Gyorgy and others (South End Press, 478 pp., paper, \$8.00), is more comprehensive, although even less accurate, than the first generation with which I have already dealt in these pages. Notwithstanding its quality—or perhaps because of it—the book is reported to be out-selling every other non-fiction work at the Harvard Co-op Bookstore. Helen Caldicott is a pediatrician whose glibly hysterical articles and speeches have made her a major figure in the anti-nuclear movement; she has begun appearing as a curtain-raiser at West Coast rock concerts. Her *Nuclear Madness* (Autumn Press, 120 pp., paper, \$3.95) is aptly titled.

Why Racial Preference Is Illegal and Immoral

Carl Cohen

THE role of race in assuring social justice is again squarely before the Supreme Court in a case whose full and revealing name is: *Kaiser Aluminum & Chemical Corporation and United Steelworkers of America, AFL-CIO, v. Brian F. Weber, individually and on behalf of all other persons similarly situated.*

Weber, a white unskilled steelworker, is Bakke's analogue. The Steelworkers Union and Kaiser Aluminum are not the only forces against him. The United Auto Workers and the United Mine Workers, the National Education Association, the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, and assorted other unions are against him. The American Civil Liberties Union is against him. Even the United States government is formally aligned against him. On Weber's side is the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (with some associated non-Jewish ethnic groups) and, according to repeated surveys, an overwhelming majority of the American population, including a majority of the black population.

But the issues at stake here, touching the most fundamental rights of individual persons, are not to be decided by counting noses. The chief things going for Weber are the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended, and sound moral principles. Thrice is he armed who hath his quarrel just.

Weber has thus far been victorious, both in the Federal District Court, and in the Federal Court of Appeals (5th Circuit, New Orleans). His formidable opponents find it difficult to overcome the plain words of the law applied straightforwardly to the established facts of his case. The law (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, Sec. 703) forbids flatly all discrimination in employment because of race.* Beyond any possible doubt (as we shall see) Weber was discriminated against by his employer, and classified by his employer, and had his status as an employee adversely affected because of his race. That the employment practice through

which this was done is a violation of this federal law is an ineluctable conclusion of any rational mind.

Is it not remarkable, then, that unions, industry, and government should now join in the effort to persuade the Supreme Court to evade this conclusion? Weber's opponents are neither foolish nor evil. They seek, somehow, to surmount the barriers to racially discriminatory treatment in order to achieve objectives they think good. Reflection upon this case will oblige the Supreme Court—and all citizens who would reach thoughtful judgment on these issues—to reconsider those objectives, and to appraise the means by which they have been pursued.

The *Bakke* case, and the *DeFunis* case before it, dealt with racially discriminatory practices in professional-school admissions—a matter for which the middle classes have, rightly, a tender concern. *Weber* deals with racial discrimination in blue-collar employment. The injury done Brian Weber was at least as great as that done Allan Bakke, and the class Weber formally represents is very much larger, if less articulate, than that directly affected by racially preferential school admissions. It is disturbing, therefore, that the voices raised in behalf of Weber's rights, and the rights of literally millions of individual citizens in like circumstances, are so painfully few. Silence now from quarters that were outspoken in opposition to racial preference in higher education may lead some to infer that self-interest, more than justice, was what motivated that earlier concern.

In both spheres—school admissions and industrial employment—the same issues arise: in the

* Subsection (a) of Sec. 703 reads:

"It shall be an unlawful employment practice for an employer—

(1) to fail or refuse to hire or discharge any individual, or otherwise to discriminate against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin; or

(2) to limit, segregate, or classify his employees or applicants for employment in any way which would deprive any individual of employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect his status as an employee, because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin" 42 U.S. Codes 2000e—2 (a) (1970).

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allocation of scarce goods, may one's race count in one's favor? If ever, when? In *Bakke* a racially preferential admission system at the University of California Medical School at Davis was struck down, but attention to race in the admissions process was there held permissible within certain very narrow limits: to advance the diversity of an entering class, or to remedy the condition of specific persons who had been discriminated against by the school using the racial instrument. *Weber* is in many important respects different. Here the factor of diversity does not enter; here matters pertaining to intellectual qualifications are replaced by matters pertaining to seniority. Here the stakes are greater and the underlying moral issues are presented more cleanly.

I

THIS is what happened. Kaiser (Kaiser Aluminum & Chemical Corporation) and the union (United Steelworkers of America, AFL-CIO) sought to increase the number of minority workers in the skilled crafts at Kaiser's Grammercy, Louisiana, plant. To this end, in a 1974 collective-bargaining agreement, they changed the system whereby employees would enter on-the-job training for craft positions. Prior craft experience was eliminated as a requirement, and entrance ratios, by race, were established for acceptance in the job-training program. For each white worker admitted one minority worker would be admitted, until the percentage of minority craft workers in the Grammercy plant roughly approximated the percentage of the minority population in the surrounding area, then about 40 per cent. Dual seniority lists were established, one black and one white, and each two vacancies filled with the persons at the top of the two racially distinct lists.

It was an inevitable result of this system that some employees would be favored because of their race, and some would be injured because of theirs. Brian Weber was refused admission to the job-training program although his seniority was higher than some employees from the other racial list who were admitted. Weber sued on his own behalf and on behalf of all non-minority employees who applied for on-the-job training at the Grammercy plant after that labor agreement was signed. A racially preferential scheme for allocating on-the-job training opportunities, he argues, is a clear violation of the Federal Civil Rights Act.

One portion of Title VII of that Act deals explicitly with on-the-job training programs. That portion (subsection (d) of Sec. 703) reads as follows:

It shall be an unlawful employment practice for any employer, labor organization, or joint labor-management committee controlling apprentice-

ship or other training or retraining, *including on-the-job training programs*, to discriminate against any individual because of his race, color, religion, sex, or national origin in admission to, or employment in, any program established to provide apprenticeship or other training [42 U.S. Codes 2000e-2 (d) (1970); emphasis added].

Was it prescience that caused the Congress to formulate this ban with language so precisely and indubitably covering the case at hand? Not at all. Title VII had as its purpose the elimination of all ethnic favoritism in employment; there had been, at the time of its adoption, plenty of experience of the ways in which racial prejudice can be given effect—one of the commonest being in job-training programs. In that form as in all forms, said the Congress in effect, racial discrimination in employment is no longer permissible.

How can Kaiser and the union (and the U.S. Department of Justice) reasonably argue that such a scheme is indeed lawful or fair? They contend that the law, properly interpreted, does not forbid this variety of racial preference, which they think justified by our history of discrimination. They contend that if the pursuit of pressing social objectives now imposes incidental costs on individuals, Weber and his like are the right persons to bear those costs. They contend that they were ordered, by the U.S. government, to introduce racial preference of precisely this kind. And they contend that Weber wasn't really injured by this program at all. I examine these arguments in turn.

II

"KAISER and the union [the first argument begins] reached an agreement that was fully in accord with the spirit of Title VII. There was a voluntary effort to bring a greater number of minority workers into the skilled crafts. Congress never intended to forbid such voluntary efforts. If now the product of such agreements, reached through collective bargaining, is struck down, the cause of racial justice will have been dealt a devastating blow.

"We must [this argument continues] permit management and labor to join, as in this case, to correct a racially unbalanced situation flowing from the historical and social realities of American life. Blacks have been discriminated against, cruelly and consistently, by industry and by unions. Now an effort is being made to give redress. It is an ironic inversion of the Civil Rights Act to use that Act to forbid the only instruments that may effectively achieve its own intended result.

"It is true [the argument proceeds] that Title VII specifies that preferential treatment of racial minorities is not required [Section 703 (j)]. But that is not to say it is forbidden. When its aim is precisely that of the Act itself, it must not be forbidden. Weber relies upon the narrowest con-

struction of the words and misses—inadvertently or deliberately—the remedial spirit of the law and of the Kaiser program here in question.”

The main pillar of Weber’s opposition comes to this: “If the Court agrees that racial quotas such as this one are discriminatory, we will be kept from doing what many of us think it is necessary to do, and do quickly, in the interest of long-term justice. Let it be understood, therefore [the argument concludes], that this quota, although it does of course distinguish by race, and does, admittedly, give favor by race, does not ‘discriminate’ by race in the bad sense that the law condemns. When we come to realize that some plans for racial balance, while they may have adverse effects upon some white workers, are nevertheless justified by pressing societal needs, we will also see what interpretation of the law is required by justice.”

To put the argument plainly is to see both its earnestness and its frailty. The requirements of the Civil Rights Act, which in turn were intended to give concrete meaning to the constitutional demand that no citizen be denied the equal protection of the laws, were aimed at bringing to a final halt all formal discrimination on the basis of race—and color, religion, sex, and national origin. It certainly was not intended, and it obviously was not formulated, to forbid only such racial discrimination as employers and unions thought objectionable, while permitting any racially discriminatory schemes that employers and unions might by agreement find worthy or convenient. What the employer and the union happen to prefer, whether their motives be honorable or crass, has absolutely no weight, says the law in effect, against the *right* of each individual citizen to be dealt with, in matters pertaining to employment, without regard to race, religion, or national origin.

III

“**B**UT that cannot be the correct interpretation of the law,” answer Kaiser and the union in chorus, “because the Supreme Court has several times, in the years since, recognized the lawfulness and wisdom of racially preferential employment schemes. Indeed, our federal courts have *ordered* the imposition of such racial preference in some cases! So it is clearly false that *all* racial preference has been forbidden. If that is so, then it is not obviously true that *this* scheme for racial preference has been forbidden.”

This rejoinder brings us to the core, legal and moral, of the controversy in *Weber*. What kind of attention to race does the Civil Rights Act (and, indirectly, the Constitution) permit? And what should it permit? In the *Bakke* case, this question was complicated by the entry of First Amendment considerations pertaining to the robust exchange of ideas in the classroom; the holding in *Bakke*

was tangled by the fact that Justice Powell’s pivotal opinion, although condemning racial favoritism, permits attention to race to advance diversity among an entering school class. Here, in *Weber*, such First Amendment considerations are totally absent. What, if anything, remains to justify race-conscious employment practices?

There is a clear and honorable answer to this question, given forcefully by federal courts at every level. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act forbids all deliberate discrimination by race, save only in cases where racial classification is absolutely essential to give redress to *identifiable persons* injured by racial discrimination and *where the injury done them was done by the same party upon whom the numerical program is imposed*. One purpose only may justify numerical schemes using racial categories: the *making whole* of those to whom redress for racial injury is specifically owed, by those who owe it.

For example: the known victims of racial discrimination by a trucking company have been held entitled, as a remedy, to a place in the seniority lists of that company that would have been theirs if they had not been so victimized. To put them now in as good a place as they would have been in but for the discriminatory employment practice from which they can be shown to have suffered, it may be necessary to attend to race. Only in that way can the victims be made whole; they would otherwise remain subordinate to persons who, had it not been for racial discrimination in that company, would now be their subordinates. (See *Franks v. Bowman Transportation Co.* 424 U.S. 747 [1976].) In such cases, the racially oriented remedy cannot be refused on the ground that the effect on other employees is adverse because, although the employees who suffer from the imposition of the plan are very possibly innocent themselves, they have clearly benefited, in seniority, from the specific discriminatory practice for which remedy is being given. Race-conscious remedies for the victims of illegal discrimination are lawful, consistent with Title VII, only in such circumstances.

Weber and Kaiser Aluminum are in no such circumstances. Upon examining the facts, the Federal District Court found that Kaiser had not been guilty of any discriminatory hiring or promotion at its Grammercy plant. Kaiser’s industrial-relations superintendent at that plant testified that, prior to 1974, Kaiser had vigorously sought trained black craftsmen from the general community. Advertising in periodicals and newspapers that were published primarily for black subscribers, Kaiser found it very difficult to attract black craftsmen. The evidence established two key facts:

1. Kaiser had a serious, operational, no-discrimination hiring policy at its Grammercy plant from the day of that plant’s opening in 1958.

2. Not one of the black employees who were offered on-the-job training opportunities over more senior white employees (pursuant to the 1974 Labor Agreement) had been subject to any prior employment discrimination by Kaiser.

From these facts it is an inescapable conclusion that the quota system at Kaiser's Grammercy plant was not an instrument for the specific redress of persons injured by racial discrimination there; it was unabashed racial preference aimed at numerical proportions having nothing to do with past conduct in that plant. Such preference Title VII outlaws. The distinction, between impermissible racial preference and permissible remedy for past discrimination, is put eloquently by the Circuit Court of Appeals in affirming Weber's rights:

If employees who have been arbitrarily favored are deprived of benefits capriciously conferred on them in order that those who were arbitrarily deprived may receive what they should, in fairness, have had to begin with, no law is violated. This is so even if both the class whose rights are restored and the class required to "move over" are defined by race—if the original arbitrariness was defined in that manner. And the reason is that no one is being favored or disfavored, advantaged or injured, under these circumstances *because* of race; rather, those who have been unjustly deprived receive their due and those who have been arbitrarily favored surrender some of the largesse capriciously conferred on them. That these consequences end by race is a mere incident of the fact that they began that way.*

But those who were favored by race at Weber's expense were admittedly not the victims of such original arbitrariness. The Circuit Court's support of Weber is therefore categorical: "[U]nless a preference is enacted to restore employees to their rightful places within a particular employment scheme it is strictly forbidden by Title VII" (p. 225).

IV

SINCE it is clear that the beneficiaries of this racial program were not victims of Kaiser's previous discrimination, and equally clear that the use of dual seniority lists is an explicit effort to favor blacks over whites, the defenders of this program are compelled to resort to a different justification—past "societal discrimination."

"We cannot deny [say the defenders in effect] that the two-list system deliberately favors one race over another. But we do deny that favoring this race at this time in this country is unfair. We contend that, in view of the historical discrimination against blacks (and other minorities), the racially preferential device now before us is entirely justifiable. It is justifiable not only because

blacks have been so long oppressed, but because, as a corollary, whites have been unfairly *advantaged* by race prejudice. The white employees of Kaiser who are passed over by this plan may indeed be innocent of any racial discrimination themselves, but they have been and are the beneficiaries of racial discrimination by others. This is the heart of our justification. Favor to blacks now is just because of the favor whites have enjoyed until now."

This is the principled argument by which many without selfish interests in these programs are persuaded that they are fair. One might have expected the American Civil Liberties Union, for example, to spring to the defense of the rights of an almost defenseless individual. Instead it joins the forces against Weber because the ACLU has convinced itself that his rights have not really been infringed on, even though he suffers from deliberate disadvantage because of race. How can that be?

"Racial preference in employment is justified [the argument proceeds] when it is a response to the morally legitimate demand that the *lingering effects* of past racial discrimination be remedied. The lingering effects of historical oppression include the continuing losses of decent employment, together with the money and status that it brings. But the same historical race prejudice that has systematically blocked minorities from access to decent jobs has conferred an involuntary benefit upon whites because, while the number of desirable jobs remains roughly constant, the elimination of competition by minority workers results in the availability of desirable jobs for whites in generous disproportion to their numbers. This benefit is conferred even upon those whites who may, in fact, deplore the prejudice from which they gain. Yet they did gain. Now, with racial quotas favoring blacks, they lose. Their present loss is morally justified by their earlier gain. The primary target of racially preferential programs should be those guilty of past unlawful discrimination, of course. But where those guilty parties simply cannot be identified or are no longer available to make restitution, a secondary but legitimate target is the unjust enrichment attributable to that racial discrimination. Quota plans, like the one devised by Kaiser and the union, seek to redistribute that unjust enrichment. Seen in this light, their fairness—the moral rightness of racial preference for societal rebalancing—cannot be de-

* 653 F. 2d 216, 225 (1977); page references below refer to this decision. The Supreme Court has agreed. In a case arising from a plan devised to give remedy to school employees within a previously discriminatory system, the Supreme Court declined review of a decision that, in view of the source and nature of that earlier injury, a minority worker may there be entitled to preferential treatment "not because he is black, but because, and only to the extent that, he has been discriminated against" *Chance v. Board of Examiners*, 534 F. 2d 993, 999 (1976); cert. denied 431 U.S. 965 (1977).

nied." So reasons the ACLU explicitly, and many other honest citizens implicitly, in giving pained approval to race quotas.

The argument fails utterly upon inspection. It relies upon a premise that is clearly and admittedly false in the *Weber* case and like cases. And were all its premises true, they could still not justify the racial preference here in question.

Consider the premises first. The adverse impact on Weber is held justifiable by his unjust enrichment resulting from the bad conduct of others. But if Weber were in any way the beneficiary of past discrimination, he certainly was not unjustly enriched by employment discrimination in the Grammercy plant. In that plant, it is agreed by advocates of the quota and by the courts, there had been no refusal to hire or promote blacks or other minorities, no racial discrimination from which Weber benefited. But the injustice done to Weber is manifested in the loss of entitlements he earned by ten years of work in *that plant*—not in the Kaiser Corporation or in the workforce at large. His entitlements in this matter cannot have been acquired as the result of the historical misconduct of others. Long before Weber came to work at that plant, blacks and whites received equal employment treatment there—so the claim that simply by virtue of his having the seniority that he did in the Grammercy plant Weber was enjoying an unjust enrichment is simply false. That false premise cannot justify "redistribution." The Circuit Court put the matter crisply: "Whatever other effects societal discrimination may have, it has had—by the specific finding of the court below—no effect on the seniority of any party here. It is therefore inappropriate to meddle with any party's seniority or with any perquisites attendant upon it, since none has obtained any unfair seniority advantage at the expense of any other" (p. 226).

But suppose *arguendo* (what is not true) that Weber had been unfairly enriched by past racial discrimination. What would follow? The enrichment thus identified might then be a target for redistribution. Among whom? To take from Weber and give to another because Weber got his seniority "unjustly" could conceivably be justified (if ever) *only* if those to whom the redistribution were made were the same persons from whom the spoils had been taken in the first instance. The appealing argument by which so many are persuaded makes the faulty supposition that, if X has gained fortuitously but undeservedly from some unidentifiable Y, we are morally justified in taking from him and giving to a wholly different Z who suffered no loss to X's benefit, but who happens to be of the same *race* as that injured but unidentifiable Y. Buried in this reasoning process is the mistaken premise that the distribution of goods or opportunities is rightly made by racial categories. Z, the person now given preference over X because of race, has a right to get from him (this

premise supposes) because Z is black, and blacks have been so long oppressed. But rights do not and cannot inhere in skin-color groups. Individuals have rights, not races. It is true, of course, that many persons have been cruelly deprived of rights simply because of their blackness. Whatever the remedy all such persons deserve, it is deserved by those injured and because of their injury; nothing is deserved because of the color of one's skin. This is the philosophical nub of the *Weber* case.

V

So long-lasting and self-perpetuating have been the damages done to many blacks and others by discrimination that some corrective steps must be undertaken. The moral anxiety created by this need for affirmative action accounts, in part, for the willingness of some to tolerate outright racial quotas. In the passion to make social restitution, sensitive and otherwise fair-minded people have gotten the moral claims of living persons badly confused. The head of the Office of Federal Contract Compliance (by whom, as we shall see, Kaiser was threatened) epitomizes this confusion: "Society is trying to correct an age-old problem, and Weber is a victim of that process. There is nothing I can say to him. This is something that has to happen. The question is whether you give priority to a group that's been systematically deprived of opportunity while Brian Weber's parents and grandparents were not discriminated against. If someone has to bear the sins of the fathers, surely it has to be their children" (New York Times Magazine, February 25, 1979).

But deliberately visiting the sins of the fathers upon their innocent sons and grandsons, to the special advantage of persons not connected with the original sinning, is conduct neither lawful nor morally right. To suppose that both the beneficiaries of redress and those who are made to carry its burden are properly identified by race is, to be plain, racism. It is ethical racism because supposed with good will. It is simplistic because, on this view, race by itself—without consideration of the nature or degrees of past injuries, present advantages, or future pains—is sufficient to trigger the preferential device. The mistaken view in question is therefore properly entitled *simplistic ethical racism*.

Injuries are suffered in fact, claims made and burdens carried, by individual persons. Civil society is constituted to protect the rights of individuals; the sacrifice of fundamental individual rights cannot be justified by the desire to advance the well-being of any ethnic group. Precisely such justification is precluded by the Fourteenth Amendment of our Constitution, whose words—no state "shall deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws"—express no mere

legalism but a philosophical principle of the deepest importance. Explicating that clause, in a now famous passage, the Supreme Court wrote: "The rights created by the first section of the Fourteenth Amendment are, by its terms, guaranteed to the individual. The rights established are personal rights. . . . Equal protection of the laws is not advanced through indiscriminate imposition of inequalities (*Shelly v. Kraemer* 334 U.S. 1, 22 [1948]).

The nature and degree of the injury done to many Americans because they were black or brown or yellow varies greatly from case to case. Some such injuries may justify compensatory advantage now to those injured. But the calculation of who is due what from whom is a very sticky business; compensatory instruments are likely to compound injustice unless the individual circumstances of all involved—those who were originally hurt, those who benefit now, and those who will bear the cost—are carefully considered. Whatever compensatory advantage may be given—in employment or elsewhere—it must be given to all and only those who have suffered like injury, without regard to their race. What we may not do, constitutionally or morally, is announce in effect: "No matter that you, X, were innocent and gained no advantage; you are white and therefore lose points. No matter whether you, Z, were damaged or not; you are black and therefore gain points." If the moral ground for compensatory affirmative action is the redress of injury, the uninjured have no claim to it, and all those individuals of whatever ethnic group who have suffered the injury in question have an equal claim to it.

Racially based numerical instruments have this grave and unavoidable defect: they cannot make the morally crucial distinctions between the blameworthy and the blameless, between the deserving and the undeserving. As compensatory devices they are under-inclusive in failing to remedy the same damage when it has been done to persons of the non-favored races; they are over-inclusive in benefiting some in the favored categories who are without claims, often at substantial cost to innocent persons. Except in those cases where the discriminatory policy of the employer is established, and the identity of injured applicants or employees determinable, racial preference in employment is intolerably blunt, incapable of respecting the rights of individuals.

VI

THIS unsuitability of the racial means to the compensatory end partly explains the queasiness of language with which the advocates of "numerical instruments" defend their schemes. Although they believe their aims are good, there is yet widespread shame among them that they resort to racial preference to advance them. Hence the use of euphemisms like "disad-

vantaged" in identifying the beneficiaries of racial programs, when what is really meant is "black" or "minority." Not all minorities are disadvantaged, and not all those disadvantaged are minorities, obviously. But it is tempting to hide the racial character of a program which, if exposed, would be legally and morally intolerable.*

"Affirmative action"—a phrase that now pervades our language—has commonly been used in the same duplicitous way. Affirmative steps to eliminate racially discriminatory practices rightly win the assent of all. Affirmative efforts to recruit fairly (whether for on-the-job training programs or for professional schools), affirmative inquiry to determine whether testing is job-related and to insure that evaluation of performance is not racially infected—in such forms affirmative action is of unquestionable merit. But when, in the name of affirmative action for racial equality, the deliberately unequal treatment of the races is introduced, we suffer a national epidemic of double-speak. Employment advertisements everywhere exhibit this duplicity with an almost ritualized motto: "An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer." The very term "affirmative action" has lost its honor and has become, for most, a euphemism for racial preference.

The unsavory character of their means is recognized by the advocates of racial instruments; that recognition is revealed by an inclination to be covert in conduct and to equivocate in language. Unsavoriness is tolerated here, however, even by organizations whose normal pride it is to expose immoral expedience in the body politic. Nothing is more indicative of the true spirit of a community than the character of the instruments it permits, and of those it precludes, in advancing public policy. Police surveillance to root out spies, the suppression of speech (radical or conservative) to protect the peace—all such instruments are rejected in a decent society. Civil libertarians wisely insist that we forswear instruments that invade the rights of individuals, even when forswearing proves inconvenient. The use of such instruments is precluded, forbidden not just to evil people but to all people. Preference by race is one of these forbidden instruments. The very high priority given to this exclusionary principle, and its applicability to all including the state itself, marks it as *constitutional* in the most profound sense.

Efforts to cut constitutional corners—however well-intentioned—corrupt a civil society. The means we use penetrate the ends we achieve; when the instrument is unjust, the outcome will be in-

* In the original trial of the *Bakke* case, the University of California defended the racial quotas at the Davis medical school as being for all "disadvantaged" students. When the court noted that not a single disadvantaged person who was not of an ethnic minority had been admitted in all the years of that program's operation, the university in effect conceded the misdescription. Not a pretty business.

fectured by that injustice. This lesson even civil libertarians have always to be relearning.

VII

THE inconsistency between racially preferential means and the end of honestly equal treatment is exquisitely exhibited in one aspect of the *Weber* case upon which Kaiser and the union place much emphasis. "We are caught [say they] in a monstrous double bind. What will you have us do? Desegregate, you say. Integrate your workforce; show us that you mean to undo, affirmatively, the wrongs earlier done. We do it, making serious efforts to increase the number of minorities in craft jobs through advertisement, recruitment, encouragement. We get some results, but they are not dramatic. Then you—the nation speaking through your regulatory agencies—tell us that what we have done is not enough. You threaten us! Of course we take action in response to your threat—and having done so, we are threatened at law on the other side! Such inconsistency is unbearable. You, the body politic, must speak with one tongue!"

What is that first threat of which Kaiser complains? It came from the Office of Federal Contract Compliance whose regulations mandate "affirmative action" by all government contractors. The withdrawal of all federal contracts was the price Kaiser might have had to pay if, to avoid being found in "non-compliance," racial preference for minorities had not been introduced. Whence does the OFCC get the authority to make such threats? From an order of the President of the United States, say they, Executive Order 11246. This order requires federal contractors to take affirmative action to prevent low employment of women and minorities in their workforces, on the assumption that most disproportionately low employment is the result of discrimination. Since the racial instrument agreed upon was a direct response to federal authority exercised under that valid order, it is outrageous now, say Kaiser and the union, to attack us for violation of the Civil Rights Act.

This response to official inconsistency cannot help but evoke some sympathy. But as a defense of racial quotas it is worthless. The argument fails on two levels. First, Executive Order 11246 does not require and cannot justify racial quotas in cases like this one, in which the conduct of the employer has not been unlawfully discriminatory. The Order says nothing about numerical ratios. Indeed, its plain words *forbid* all racial preference. The relevant passage of that Order reads: "The contractor will take affirmative action to insure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, color, religion, sex, or national origin" (30 Fed. Reg. 12319 [1965]).

Some numerical plans to protect employment for

minorities have been upheld by the courts as valid executive actions—but they have been so upheld as responses to specifically identified violations by those upon whom the remedy was imposed. The so-called Philadelphia Plan was held permissible under Title VII, but that holding was explicitly tied to prior exclusionary practices by the six trade unions controlling the workforce in the construction industry in Philadelphia. Whatever tools the Office of Federal Contract Compliance may think itself entitled to employ, it has no authority in law, and certainly none in morals, to press for a racial quota in cases where, as here, those getting preference under the scheme had not been injured by that employer, and those injured by the scheme had not benefited from any misconduct of that employer.

The argument fails at a second level as well. If Executive Order 11246 be interpreted so as to authorize the OFCC to require racial quotas in cases like this one, the Executive Order itself is plainly unlawful, an illegitimate exercise of administrative authority in conflict with federal statute. The Civil Rights Act specifically prohibits racial classification in admission to on-the-job training programs (Sect. 703 (d); cited above, p. 41). The quota plan devised by Kaiser and the union is, as we have seen, patently in violation of this section. When the law and an executive order clash, there can be no doubt of the outcome. Writes the Circuit Court: "If Executive Order 11246 mandates a racial quota for admission to on-the-job training by Kaiser, *in the absence of any prior hiring or promotion discrimination*, the executive order must fall before this direct congressional prohibition" (p. 227).

Only by resolutely enforcing the rights of citizens can the insolence of office be restrained. Individual workers, without power or money, need to be protected against civil servants who take it upon themselves to threaten in order to be able to report numerical ratios they think desirable, claiming only to be following the orders of their superiors.

VIII

DEFENSES of racial preference—by efforts to reinterpret the law, by confused arguments based on "societal discrimination," by claim of executive order—all collapse. It is important to see why they *should* collapse. The defenders, conscious of their own righteous pursuit of racial justice, little doubt that the tools they wish to employ would have the good consequences they hope for. To question the merit of those tools is for them almost a betrayal of the oppressed in whose behalf they claim to battle. In their eyes the conflict is only over whether they are to be permitted to do a good deed—i.e., give preference to racial minorities—not whether it is a good deed, or whether its consequences will be good.

Decency of motivation, however, does not insure the goodness of the immediate object, or the goodness of its consequences. Racial justice is an aim that all share; it is distorted when transformed into formulas for ethnic proportionality in workforces and professions based (as in this case) upon ethnic populations in the surrounding area. What accounts for this transformation? Motives honorable in their general statement are blended with a vision of cultural homogeneity that is profoundly unhealthy. The objectives then sought in making that blend operational often prove inconsistent with the original aim. It is this inchoate vision of homogeneity—made concrete in numerical proportions—that lies behind racial instruments like the one at issue in *Weber*. Federal Appellate Courts have not been oblivious to the evils that ensue:

There are good reasons why the use of racial criteria should be strictly scrutinized and given legal sanction only where a compelling need for remedial action can be shown. . . . Government recognition and sanction of racial classifications may be inherently divisive, reinforcing prejudices, confirming perceived differences between the races, and weakening the government's educative role on behalf of equality and neutrality. It may also have unexpected results, such as the development of indicia for placing individuals into different racial categories. Once racial classifications are imbedded in the law, their purpose may become perverted: a benign preference under certain conditions may shade into malignant preference at other times. Moreover, a racial preference for members of one minority might result in discrimination against another minority, a higher proportion of whose members had previously enjoyed access to a certain opportunity [*Associated General Contractors of Massachusetts Inc. v. Altshuler* 490 F. 2d 9,17-18 (1973)].

In this spirit three Federal Circuit Courts have repeatedly refused to approve racial quotas in the absence of proved past discriminatory practice dictating that specific remedy.

Racial classifications have insidious long-term results: anger and envy flowing from rewards or penalties based on race; solidification of racial barriers and the encouragement of racial separatism; inappropriate entry of race into unrelated intellectual or economic matters; the indirect support of condescension and invidious judgments among ethnic groups—in sum, the promotion of all the conditions that produce racial disharmony and racial disintegration. What Kaiser and the union defend is very far from an innocuous good deed. It is a plan having very damaging consequences to very many people.

Some of the damage, direct and substantial, is done to those, like *Weber* and *Bakke*, who bear the immediately resulting burden. "Society" does not pay; the "white majority" does not pay; individual citizens pay. The penalty to them is great

and undeserved. One notable feature of the *Bakke* decision, almost entirely overlooked by commentators and the press, is the fact that all nine Supreme Court Justices there agreed that, as a result of the quota system used by the medical school at Davis, Allan Bakke was done a constitutional injury—that is, an injury he should not have to suffer unless it can be well justified. Even the four Justices who thought the injury could be justified took the hurt done to him very seriously. One of those four (that is, one of the group who did *not* side with Bakke), Justice Blackmun, refers to the injury done to Bakke as an "ugly" one. The other five Justices struck down that racially preferential program; Powell among them condemns the damage such programs do. The Washington Supreme Court, too, in deciding against *Marco DeFunis* in an analogous case, did not deny that he had been seriously hurt, and candidly rejected the claim that such quotas are "benign." A program giving special favor to racial minorities, say they, "is certainly not benign with respect to non-minority students replaced by it" (*DeFunis v. Odegaard* 507 P 2d 1182). *Reverse discrimination* is not an invention or a hypothesis yet to be confirmed; it is a sociological and legal fact.

IX

THE reality of the evils flowing from racial instruments introduces one of the most intriguing aspects of the *Weber* case. A dispute arises between the District and the Circuit Court beneath which lies a momentous philosophical issue. Numerical remedies based on race do damage, the two courts agree; they further agree that this is a case in which the imposition of such a numerical remedy cannot be justified because there has been, in fact, no previous unlawful discrimination by the employer here. However, in those cases in which such remedy might prove justifiable (previous discriminatory practice in that setting being alleged), the following question arises: may that numerical instrument of redress be devised and executed on the authority of the employer and union acting jointly? Or is a racial quota permissible as remedy only on the express authority of the judiciary? The District Court not only found the remedy unjustifiable, but held in addition that such painful remedies would in no case be in the province of unions and management to impose. The Circuit Court, agreeing on the first point, did not agree on the second. Voluntary remedial action (said they) is preferable to court action; therefore, to insist upon judicial imposition of remedies would interfere unduly with reasonable private amelioration. The underlying issue here is the locus of authority in resolving questions of justice. Which court is the wiser?

In permitting numerical remedies to be imposed (if at all) only by the judiciary, the District Court,

I submit, is deeply right. The reasons for this are several and complicated.

First, the question of whether the circumstances are such as to justify the imposition of a numerical remedy (a question that must be answered affirmatively if any such remedy is to be lawful) is precisely the kind of question that cannot be answered fairly by employers and unions acting in their joint interests. Individuals will bear the burden; if the case were of a kind to justify the imposition of that burden on Weber and his like, past discrimination by that employer in that context must be proved or admitted. No employer is likely to make that admission. To do so would invite a host of very expensive lawsuits in behalf of those injured. Employers will therefore enter such agreements only with the understanding that no past discrimination has been proved or admitted. That very understanding (however arguable it may be) on which an employer might be willing to enter an agreement with a union to give racial preference to minorities is precisely the understanding which, if reflecting the facts truly, shows that racial preference unjustly injurious and unlawful.

This peculiar feature of "voluntary" racial instruments is admitted—even emphasized, ironically—by the UAW, the NEA, and other assorted unions. If (they argue) voluntary racial preference is permissible only when the employer's past conduct would be found in violation of Title VII, there will be no voluntary race-conscious action. For, as they agree: "[I]t is usually difficult to predict whether or not [previous] discrimination would be found" (associated unions, brief *amici*, p. 13). Indeed! For this reason precisely it is a question of such a kind that no answer to it reached as part of a labor-management agreement could be trusted.

The aggregated unions continue: "Moreover, the employer would, by taking voluntary action, put itself in a no-win situation in a suit such as this. Either its past conduct will be determined to be unlawful, thereby inviting litigation by discriminatees, or the remedial action will be found unlawful, and liability to white employees will exist" (*ibid.*). Just so! But the authors of this candid statement apparently do not see where their argument leads. They would like the courts to conclude that, since the present standard (that "voluntary" racial quotas suppose the same finding of unlawful discrimination which alone might justify court-imposed remedies) effectively precludes "voluntary" quotas altogether, we should permit the introduction of a new standard, one that would allow "voluntary" quotas under some factual circumstances that—as they admit—would not justify a court in imposing them! What could serve as such a standard? The lone dissenting judge of the Circuit Court, pursuing the same line, is driven to propose an astounding answer: A "voluntary" quota plan should be upheld, he suggests, if it is "a reasonable remedy for an arguable violation of Title VII" (p. 230, emphasis added).

This standard is neither feasible in practice, nor morally acceptable if it were. As a practical matter, such notions as "reasonable remedy" and "arguable violation" have virtually no objective content. Only the courts could resolve, on a case-by-case basis, disputed claims about "arguable violations" and about the reasonableness of remedy. Endless litigation could not be avoided—but it is the elimination of time-consuming litigation that is alleged to be the great merit of "voluntary" racial instruments. The increase in court involvement that would result undercuts any proposed justification of "voluntary" quotas on grounds of efficiency.

More important than its inefficiency, however, is the fact that the proposed standard (that a voluntary quota plan should be upheld if it is "a reasonable remedy for an arguable violation of Title VII") is morally unacceptable. Just remedies presuppose some determinable wrongs for which they give redress and by which they are justified. It is confusion of mind to propose a *remedy* for an *arguable* violation; one cannot put right what might prove on more judicious examination to have been no wrong at all.

ALL "voluntary" quotas (i.e., those introduced without court imposition) presuppose reliance upon some standard that must encounter essentially the same problem. The philosophical dimensions of the dispute between the two courts here emerge. The Circuit Court's position exhibits irremediable moral defect: by permitting racially preferential programs without the backing of judicial authority, it permits the delegation of questions of justice to private hands that are neither equipped, nor disposed, nor authorized to resolve them fairly.

To resolve a matter of individual right the bargaining process between labor and management is almost the worst imaginable tool. The impartial determination of facts without regard to interest, and the honest application of principles without regard to advantage, are essential in adjudicating questions of right—but the elimination of regard for self-interest and advantage is precisely what is impossible at the bargaining table.

Even if the needed impartiality were possible there, it would be inappropriate, uncommon, and surely could not be relied upon. Union and management bargainers are duty-bound to press for the advantage of the units they represent. The process is designed to deal with issues of pay and working conditions, not with the protection of individual rights. Justice entails giving to each his due—whether or not he or others can negotiate for it successfully.

Most important, the authority to resolve questions of justice cannot lie in a labor-management bargain. Individual rights *may not*—as a matter of law or morals—be bargained away. As a matter of constitutional principle, the Supreme Court has spoken definitively on this issue. A union, they

agree, may waive some of its rights to *collective* activity, such as the right to strike, in a bargaining agreement made with the aim of economic advantage for its members. The Court continues:

Title VII, on the other hand, stands on plainly different ground; *it concerns not majoritarian processes, but an individual's right to equal employment opportunities.* Title VII's strictures are absolute and represent a congressional command that *each* employee be free from discriminatory practices. Of necessity, *the rights conferred can form no part of the collective bargaining process* since waiver of these rights would defeat the paramount congressional purpose behind Title VII. In these circumstances, an employee's rights under Title VII are not susceptible of prospective waiver [*Alexander v. Gardner-Denver Co.* 415 U.S. 36, 51-52 (1974), *emphasis added*].

Contracts reached through collective bargaining may, of course, introduce different terms of employment for different groups of employees in the light of the relevant conditions of those groups. Race, however, is never relevant in that sense. Because racial discrimination invariably touches the non-bargainable rights of all individuals adversely affected, race itself has been identified as an inappropriate criterion for the classification of employees.*

In sum: the courts have repeatedly held that, in compromising with an employer, a union may not take race into account. Programs like the one at issue in *Weber* explicitly take race into account. The conclusion of this syllogism is inescapable.

THE unions take another tack. "You fail to note [they rejoin in effect] that this is a *voluntary* program. Weber and his fellows may be said to have relinquished their rights in this matter because, when the plan was devised, they were adequately represented by their union. The union has a duty to represent all of its members; its bargainers are selected democratically; and since white workers constitute a majority of the bargaining unit, the union process may be relied upon to reach no agreement that will violate the rights of individual white members."

It is hard to take this argument seriously. Union process is often genuinely democratic; negotiators for unions generally do seek to represent the interests of all the members of the bargaining unit. But the most sympathetic review of union process could not rationally conclude that the fairness of unions to their members over the long term has been such as to justify the delegation, to bargainers, of matters of fundamental individual right. The current flow of complaints about reverse discrimination in employment contracts in itself provides substantial evidence that the bargaining process, notwithstanding its general fairness, cannot be depended upon in this sphere. "Voluntary" is an appealing word. But its use here

suggests what is not true—that those who were injured by the racial instruments devised in the contract did themselves volunteer to carry the burden. To call Weber's sacrifice "voluntary" is most inappropriate.

This defense of "voluntary" racial instruments (even if unions were invariably sensitive to matters of individual right) avoids the key question of legitimate authority. At stake here are the rights of individuals to the most fundamental of democratic conditions—equal treatment under the law—and, moreover, their rights to that equal treatment as it bears upon the most suspect of all categorical distinctions, race. Even legislators, it may be argued, however powerful their assembly, honorable their election, and dutiful their conduct, may not take from individual citizens certain fundamental rights. With the noblest of intentions, it is not within their authority to pursue public policy at the cost of compromising the individual citizen's right not to be discriminated against because of his race or religion. Philosophers will differ about the grounds of legislative authority, but few will seriously deny that upon such authority there must be some hard limits. Unequal treatment because of race is as clear an example as there is of the violation of those limits.

If the principle here expressed were somehow mistaken, if it were sometimes just, in the cause of racial redress, to sacrifice the rights of some blameless non-beneficiaries to advantage others who had not been injured, even so it would at least be certain that no such decision could be properly made by any save the legislature of highest authority, subject to the review of the court of highest jurisdiction. The notion that, to encourage "voluntary affirmative-action plans," we may bypass the body politic, investing unions and management with the authority to bargain with fundamental human rights, makes the prospect of a reversal in the *Weber* case very distressing. Not substantive entitlements alone are at issue here, but also the procedural rights of working people to have questions of justice decided by legislatures and courts.

X

Weber and Bakke are closely analogous in this procedural regard. Weber's right to equal treatment was infringed on by a union-management agreement, Bakke's by a

* The Supreme Court has written: "[T]he statutory power to represent a craft and to make contracts as to wages, hours, and working conditions does not include the authority to make among members of the craft discriminations not based on such relevant differences. Here the discriminations based on race alone are obviously irrelevant and invidious. Congress plainly did not undertake to authorize the bargaining representative to make such discriminations" *Steele v. Louisville & Nashville R.R. Co.*, 323 U.S. 192, 203 (1944).

medical-school admissions committee. Legitimate authority was exceeded in both cases. When it was asked, in *Bakke*, for what purposes a university might consider race in admissions, Justice Powell replied, in his decisive opinion, that it may be considered for the sake of student diversity (to support the exchange of ideas in accord with First Amendment concerns), or, conceivably, as redress for the specific victims of specific injustices. "Societal discrimination" as a ground for racial preference he explicitly considered and rejected. Powell wrote:

We [i.e., the Supreme Court] have never approved a classification that aids persons perceived as members of relatively victimized groups at the expense of other innocent individuals, in the absence of judicial, legislative, or administrative findings of constitutional or statutory violations [references omitted]. After such findings have been made, the governmental interest in preferring members of the injured groups at the expense of others is substantial, since the legal rights of the victims must be vindicated. In such a case the extent of the injury and the consequent remedy will have been judicially, legislatively, or administratively defined. Also, the remedial action usually remains subject to continuing oversight to assure that it will work the least harm possible to other innocent persons competing for the benefit. Without such findings of constitutional or statutory violations it cannot be said that the government has any greater interest in helping one individual than in refraining from harming another. Thus the government has no compelling justification for inflicting such harm [*University of California Regents v. Bakke* 57 L. Ed 2d 750, 782-83 (1978)].

But findings of constitutional or statutory violations it is not the business of private bodies—unions, or managements, or medical-school committees—to make. Powell continued:

Petitioner [the Regents of the University] does not purport to have made, and is in no position to make, such findings. . . . [Even] isolated segments of our vast governmental structures are not competent to make those decisions, at least in the absence of legislative mandates and legislatively determined criteria [references omitted]. Before relying upon these sorts of findings in establishing a racial classification, a governmental body must have the authority and capability to establish, in the record, that the classification is responsive to identified discrimination (p. 783; emphasis added).

Powell's point is that a medical-school admissions committee (even though indirectly an agent of the state) is entirely without the requisite authority. Kaiser and the union have a far weaker claim to the needed authority than did they. An admissions committee is not competent to make the findings that might justify racial preference, granted. But if the admissions committee had

sought to present such findings of identified discrimination at the Davis medical school (discrimination that, in fact, the university specifically denies), they might conceivably contend that as one agent of one arm of one element of the state, it was within their province to do so—and thus might conceivably seek to justify their racial program as remedy. That claim must fail, the mission of the medical school and all its subsidiary elements being educative, not judicial. Any analogous claim made by Kaiser and the union—that they are authorized to make findings of "societal discrimination" that will justify inflicting harm on Weber and other blameless parties—is totally without warrant.

XI

IN THE absence of any showing or admission of previous illegal discrimination at the Grammercy plant, every defense of racially preferential remedy must prove unsatisfactory. Sensitive to this point, the American Civil Liberties Union argues at length that the factual circumstances of this case have been misunderstood, that Kaiser Aluminum *did* discriminate against minorities. The pattern of employment by Kaiser at other plants in earlier years is reviewed, and much is made of the racially disproportionate impact, at the Grammercy plant, of a "purportedly neutral criterion." Using the percentage of the minority population in the surrounding parishes of Louisiana as benchmark,* the argument concludes that Kaiser's workforce at the Grammercy plant in skilled-craft positions was "severely under-representative." Putting aside the question of how "representativeness" might rationally be established, or, if it had been established, what bearing that would have upon the lawfulness of Kaiser's previous conduct, it is important to note that the entire thrust of this argument is misdirected. The *Weber* case presents an appeal to our highest court on a matter of fundamental principle. That principle must be argued on the basis of a factual record properly established at trial in a responsible Federal District Court, Appellate Courts, and the Supreme Court, face the question of principle *given that record*. Even the District Court could analyze only the facts brought before it by the parties. Kaiser testified to its non-discriminatory practices at the Grammercy plant from its opening, and of its efforts to recruit black craftsmen from the general community. They would not and could not report otherwise. If (as some now claim) the record should

* ACLU and Society of American Law Teachers, brief amici, p. 11. The inappropriateness of such figures in estimating fairness with respect to employment in the skilled crafts is so obvious, and has been so often remarked, that one is embarrassed for the ACLU to find such an argument here pursued. See Thomas Sowell, "Are Quotas Good for Blacks?," COMMENTARY, June 1978.

have shown hidden unlawful conduct by Kaiser, such findings could only have entered the record at the trial level. At this point the issue is, supposing the record complete and accurate, whether, *without* such previous violations established, this racial quota is permissible.

To contend that the facts of the matter *could* be viewed differently is to blind oneself to the essence of the controversy. Had the courts found, after examining all testimony, that Kaiser had previously discriminated against minorities in its Grammercy plant, the issue now to be decided here would not even have arisen.*

XII

ALL arguments thus far explored incorporate the realization that individuals are indeed injured when disadvantaged solely because of their race. Brian Weber did not get the job-training opportunity he was entitled to. Most ordinary people, and most judges, have no difficulty in seeing that. So zealous are some of the advocates of racial preference, however, that they claim not to see it. Weber was never really hurt, say they. He has a legitimate complaint only if he was discriminated against unfairly. But he wasn't discriminated against at all! Hence he has no case.

Puzzling though this claim appears on its face, it is honestly defended, in two ways. First, it is argued, Weber has lost nothing more than seniority entitlements. But seniority systems may be altered by labor-management agreement, and in any event, seniority rights are not vested in the individual employee but in the collective-bargaining unit. Therefore, when a voluntary quota plan results in Weber's getting less than he expected in view of his greater seniority, he loses nothing that belonged to him in the first place. The injury done to him (it is contended) is apparent, not real.

This argument is twice faulty. It underplays the importance of individual seniority entitlements in the industrial context; and it does not face up to the discriminatory nature of the seniority deprivation in this case.

In allocating scarce opportunities and goods in the industrial world, seniority is critically important. For very many workers a host of matters—job security, opportunities for advanced training, vacation and retirement benefits—depend chiefly upon the number of years of service they have given. Nothing remains to them after years of service but their seniority claims. To deny that harm is done to an unskilled worker on an hourly wage when he is deprived of entitlements flowing normally from ten years' seniority shows gross moral insensitivity. Seniority does not insure qualification for positions demanding special talents, of course; but where qualifications are roughly equal, or not distinguishable, seniority above all other

considerations will be relied upon in the interests of fairness.

Seniority entitlements are tied to individuals, not just to the bargaining unit. In matters of job assignment, transfer, layoff and recall, and job training, opportunities must be distributed among competing employees. Competitive-status seniority is therefore of great moral as well as practical importance, and directly affects individuals more importantly than it does the bargaining collective. Non-competitive benefits also—pensions, sick leave, paid vacations—are commonly determined in part by length of service and therefore must be tied to individuals. Seniority, the Supreme Court writes, "has become of overriding importance, and one of its major functions is to determine who gets or who keeps an available job" (*Humphrey v. Moore* 375 U.S. 335, 346-47 [1964]). The "who" in this passage refers to individual persons, not to groups.

Seniority systems are bargainable, true. It does not follow, however, that all seniority rights are bargainable. It is essential not to confuse the *system* of seniority with individual *entitlements* under a given system in force. Once a seniority system has become a reality in rule and practice, a worker's rights and expectations under that system are his and very precious to him. It is callous to minimize the injury done when such rights are not respected.

When the ground of that disrespect is race, the injury is particularly offensive. Entitlements in themselves minor (which an opportunity for on-the-job training is not) become matters of grave concern when manipulated for racial reasons. Where one must sit on a bus or go to the toilet understandably becomes a source of rage and an issue of constitutional proportions when the determination is made by race. Protests over segregated lunch counters had as their target not the culinary opportunities denied, but the immoral character of the ground of their denial. Even if Weber's seniority expectations be thought trivial, the racial ground of the unequal treatment he received is very far from trivial.

Some who understand very clearly why Allari Bakke was injured when excluded from medical school in a racially discriminatory way fail to see that the injury done to Brian Weber is equally unjust. Applicants to a competitive program, they appreciate, have a right to evaluation on some set of relevant criteria—past performance, intellectual promise, character, or whatever—and if deserving on the basis of those criteria, ought not be deprived of place because of race. But if the performance qualifications of all applicants are

* Might an appellate court not reverse an inferior court because of its mistaken interpretation of the facts as appearing in the record? Only in those rare circumstances in which the treatment of the facts by the inferior court was "clearly erroneous." That claim would be untenable in this case.

roughly equal (as were those of Weber and the minority workers chosen in his place), where, they ask, is the injustice?

The injustice lies in the deprivation, on improper grounds, of what one is otherwise entitled to. The basis for the entitlement will be different in different contexts. Scarce places in medical or law schools are rightly allocated to persons best exhibiting the characteristics that have been determined relevant to the studies or profession to be pursued. Scarce on-the-job training opportunities are rightly allocated to those having certain seniority entitlements. The bases of Weber's and Bakke's claims to that of which they were deprived are very different; but both were wrongly denied what they would have received if the scarce available goods had been distributed in accord with established criteria in a morally just way. Both were the plain victims of racial discrimination, losing out because of the color of their skin.

Persons concerned about such injustice when done in the academic world ought seriously to consider the wisdom of remaining silent when essentially the same injustice (although with respect to different entitlements) is done in the industrial world. If preference by race should be found, in the *Weber* case, to justify the deprivation of what is fairly earned by a laborer, the security of what is fairly earned by anyone in any sphere is similarly threatened.

XIII

IF THE damage to Weber cannot reasonably be minimized, can it be wholly denied? This is the second line of defense to which Kaiser and the union fall back in the effort to show that Weber was not discriminated against at all. Weber's rights were not infringed on, they say, because he never had any seniority rights to job training here. The argument goes like this: "Where admission to a training program is properly a function of seniority, and seniority, like Weber's, is untainted by the employer's previous discrimination, he would be damaged if race were allowed to supervene. But Weber errs in thinking that seniority gives him any claim under *this* quota program, which was initiated in 1974, by Kaiser and the union, specifically to increase minority representation in the craft employments. New rights were then created, Kaiser and the union agreeing to use seniority only for the distribution of available slots *within* the two racial lists, black and white. If, in the new plan, they had agreed to use the lottery method—two separate lotteries, one for whites and one for blacks—it would be obvious that seniority was not the real issue here. They could have done just that. Weber's claim that he was deprived of seniority rights is a red herring, because the mode of selecting from each racial pool is irrelevant. So the Kaiser plan, as the dissenting judge wrote,

'stands or falls on its separation of workers into two racial pools for assignment to job training' (p. 235)."

This argument is a compound of perceptivity and blindness. Seniority was the system deliberately adopted by Kaiser and the union—but they did not make that choice at random. Years of past work in the very plant where those training opportunities were to arise was thought the fairest consideration in allocating scarce places to otherwise equally qualified workers. Seniority was adopted as a relevant and rational principle. To create two seniority lists, black and white, and then choose the top person from each list, even if he has less seniority than the fourth or twentieth person on the other list, is to override the seniority principle with race. If the basis chosen for the fair distribution of scarce opportunities had not been seniority, but (say) a lottery, then the just application of the lottery principle would require that it not be overridden by race. It is therefore perceptive to note that the real issue here goes beyond seniority—that the plan fails simply because it separates the workers into two *racial* pools—every such separation being necessarily invidious. Any system used to distribute opportunities among the members of each racial pool, even if of itself fair, must be distorted by that antecedent racial classification. Whatever besides seniority might prove just as a ground for the distribution of goods, skin color isn't it.

Is it correct to say, then, that Weber had no seniority rights here at all? No. When it is agreed by union and employer that, for allocating these job-training opportunities, length of service is the appropriate basis, employees acquire entitlements on that basis. The injustice of racial favoritism manifests itself, in this case, in the deprivation of those entitlements. Were a worker's entitlements based on some other feature of his circumstances—his experience or his performance on a competitive examination—then the injustice of racial favoritism might be manifested in the deprivation of entitlements flowing from those. Weber has a right to non-discriminatory treatment. To contend that he never had any rights in this matter because the respect in which he was discriminated against isn't the only respect in which he might have been discriminated against is a last-ditch effort to obscure the wrong that was done him.

XIV

THE villain of the piece—here, in *Bakke*, wherever it raises its head—is preference by race. The *Weber* case provides an opportunity to reaffirm the moral and constitutional commitment to govern ourselves without preference to any by reason of color, or religion, or national origin. If we undermine that commitment—even though it be in an honest effort to do good—we will reap the whirlwind.

Sex According to the Song of Songs

Hyam Maccoby

IN THE course of the last 2,000 years, a voluminous literature has grown up around the Song of Songs, one of the shortest books of the Hebrew Bible. This may seem strange, for on the surface the Song of Songs is straightforward enough. In eight brief chapters it recounts the story of a pastoral love affair, with speeches by a woman and by a man, and also, apparently, by a chorus.

Yet difficulties arise right away even with this description. The more closely one tries to piece together the details of the story, the more bewildering it becomes. What, for example, is the role of King Solomon in the story? He is mentioned from time to time, in an abrupt fashion ("Behold Solomon's bed, sixty heroes round it," or "Solomon had a vineyard, in Baal Hamon"), but his role is so uncertain that some have cast him for the hero, and others for the villain.

And what about the heroine? She is called the "Shulamite" at one point, a mysterious designation. At times she seems to be a humble vineyard attendant, or shepherdess; at other times, she seems a great lady, dressed in expensive robes and ornaments. She is a Dark Lady, like that other enigmatic figure, the Lady of Shakespeare's Sonnets; but what does *this* mean?

The course of the love affair is no easier to discern. After it seems to have been consummated, it dissolves into an anxious search by the woman for her absent love. Then come speeches of adoring praise by both man and woman, and, at the end, what some have taken for a parting. Why are certain phrases repeated at intervals ("I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles, and by the hinds of the field, that ye awaken not, nor stir up love, until it please")? And what is the meaning of the strange sayings that so often intrude, such as "Before I was aware, my soul set me upon the chariots of my princely people"?

The most puzzling and intriguing question of all has to do with the general tone and point of view of the work. Why, in this love poem that is the product of a patriarchal society, does the emphasis fall on female rather than male desire? The

woman sets herself to pursue and capture the man: "I will rise and roam the city, in the streets and squares. I will seek him whom I love. . . . I grasped and would not loose him, till I brought him to my mother's house." From the very beginning of the Song ("Let him kiss me with his mouth's kisses"), the expression of female sexual desire is uninhibited: "Stir, O North-wind, come, O South-wind! Breathe on my garden. Let its spices flow. Let my love enter his garden. Let him eat its delectable fruits." "His mouth is sweet, and all of him desirable. This is my love, this is my mate, O Jerusalem girls." "Come, my love, let us hie to the field, let us lie in the cypress, let us get to the vineyards. We will see if the vine sprouts, if the blossoms bud, if the pomegranate flowers. There will I give you my love. The mandrakes give scent, at our door is every delicacy; things both new and old, my love, I have stored for you." Very rarely has female sexuality found such open and articulate literary expression.

The puzzle of the Song of Songs has most recently been addressed in a new book by Marvin Pope in the excellent Anchor Bible series.* Pope offers his own translation of the Song of Songs together with an admirable conspectus of the entire literature that has grown up around it, from the allegorical interpretations of the synagogue and church to the modern "scientific" approaches. (Pope's personal contribution is that of an expert in the Canaanite religious poetry in the Ugaritic texts discovered at Ras Shamra, in Syria, in 1929.) Almost every possible question, historical, philological, theological, or anthropological, that has ever been asked about the Song, will be found in this long and learned book, which nevertheless contrives to be readable, and even, at times, humorous.

The central problem, in Pope's treatment, remains that of the female eroticism of the work. Was the Song written by a woman? The traditional ascription of authorship to King Solomon has, of course, little weight (even the first verse of the poem, which apparently names Solomon as the author, can be translated in various other ways). The theory that the author was a woman is at

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* *The Song of Songs: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor/Doubleday, 745 pp., \$12.00.

least as plausible as Samuel Butler's theory (endorsed by George Bernard Shaw and Robert Graves) that the author of the *Odyssey* was a woman. Yet the only commentator quoted by Pope to have held this theory is an amateur student of the Song, the psychiatrist Dr. Max Pusin, who commented on "the resemblance to modern-day [real] dreams obtained from my [female] patients." Some passages found very puzzling by other commentators seem to Dr. Pusin to be clearly dream sequences, in which the sexual yearnings and frustrations of a woman are expressed (the "walls" representing inhibitions, and "keepers of the walls" society in its repressive role).

There is nothing new in the idea that the Song contains dream-sequences; this is one of the commonest resources of commentators. Indeed, one modern critic, Solomon Freehof, though very far from having a psychoanalytical approach, has interpreted the whole Song in terms of a series of dreams, remarking, "Once the book is read thus, its very disorder makes sense." Dr. Freehof sees here a way of justifying the traditional allegorical method of interpretation; for dreams, long before Freud, were accepted as being symbolic. Other commentators have seen dream sequences as the answer not only to the question of the work's "disorder," but also to the main enigma, the immodest behavior of the female lover. As Pope dryly puts it, "Even the most chaste of maidens may have escapades in dreamland." But this method of interpretation is a little too easy; dreams do occur in the Bible, but they are always clearly indicated as such.

In the traditional mode of interpretation of synagogue and church, dream sequences are unnecessary, since the whole poem is regarded as allegorical; in this reading, the female character represents the House of Israel, or the Church, longing for God. It can easily be seen that the eroticism of the poem in general must have provided a strong motive for an allegorical treatment of it, and that the accent on female eroticism made such a treatment all the more imperative.

The traditional allegorical interpretations solve the difficulty by removing the poem from the sexual realm altogether. Such a treatment is found first in the dicta of Rabbi Akiva (1st century), whose authority overbore those who doubted the sanctity of the Song. The Midrash employs the allegorical method in an unsystematic way, while the most elaborate and unified Jewish attempt to read the Song as allegory is in the Targum, or Aramaic version (dated by Raphael Loewe, on rather speculative grounds, to the 7th century, but possibly earlier). In the Targum, a full historical interpretation is given, according to which all the main events of Israel's history are found alluded to in the Song in chronological order. (Marvin Pope's book contains, as a mere incidental feature

of his commentary on the Song, a full English version of the Targum, though he wisely stops short of investigating the extraordinary contortions of punning and syntax manipulation by which the Targum very often arrives at its "translation.")

The Christian allegorical interpretation of the Song found its first substantial expression in the commentary of Origen, who adapted the Jewish method to Christian purposes. (Much of Origen's commentary has been lost, but the context has been preserved in the commentary of Theodoret in the 5th century.) In the commonest Christian exegesis, the female of the Song represents the Church, or sometimes the individual Christian soul, and the male represents Christ, while the whole range of Christian doctrine and history is ingeniously fitted into the details of the poem's narrative structure. Another Christian interpretation that gained popularity with the rise of Mariolatry in the 12th century made the two lovers Mary and God.

NOWADAYS, we are inclined to be impatient with allegorical interpretations: with, for instance, a reading of the verse, "Your breasts are like two fawns" as signifying Moses and Aaron or (in the Christian interpretation) the two Testaments. Yet as modern allegorists, notably André Robert, have pointed out, there is good Scriptural authority for the use of sexual imagery in a theological context. Ezekiel 23 figures the relation of love and unfaithfulness between Israel and God in sexual imagery that is direct to the point of grossness. A more tender kind of sexual imagery, comparable perhaps to that of the Song, is found in Hosea: "I will woo her, I will go with her into the wilderness and comfort her: there I will restore her vineyards . . . on that day she shall call me 'husband.'" Here the genuine warmth of sexual love, jealousy, and reconciliation is utilized to express the reality of the relation between God and Israel, and yet is itself somehow not dissolved entirely into metaphor. It is possible, then, that there is in fact a deliberate religious dimension in the love poetry of the Song, even though the traditional style of detailed theological exegesis and point-for-point historical allegorization may result in a ludicrous frigidity.

It nevertheless remains relevant to ask how, even as a metaphor, a love relationship that gives full equality and activity to the female could have arisen from the supremely patriarchal society out of which the Bible comes. A metaphor is usually taken from realities known and accepted by the writer (the extended similes of Homer, which give a picture in themselves of the society of the heroic age, are a good example). On this point, a significant difference is to be noted between Jewish and Christian allegorical exegeses, as indeed between Judaism and Christianity, in their attitude to sex. In Judaism, human sexual love has never

been regarded with the abhorrence common in Christianity; on the contrary, it has been regarded as a holy sphere of life. There is not such a gap, therefore, in Jewish exegesis, between the literal and the metaphorical. Christian exegetes, such as Origen and St. Bernard, laid great stress on the abolition of "carnality" from the poem. There is repeated emphasis on the complete invalidity of a literal approach, human sex being irremediably evil. This emphasis does not exist in Jewish exegesis, which is liable, at times, to fall back into a literal approach (as when the Talmud says that the Song was the product of Solomon's youth since young men are naturally fond of love songs). Jewish exegetes, that is to say, were working with a text rooted in their own culture, while Christian exegetes were working with a text from an alien culture, a text they had to make the best of since it formed part of a given and unchallengeable canon (though indeed some Christian movements wished to get rid of it, together with the rest of the Old Testament).

This leads to the question of whether the Song is after all unique in Old Testament literature in assigning such importance and equality to the female. Is the Old Testament as uncompromisingly patriarchal as, nowadays, some women's liberationists often represent it to be? Among his many fair and sympathetic summaries of viewpoints that are not ultimately reconcilable with his own, Pope includes in his book an account of the views of a women's liberationist, Phyllis Tribble, who warmly and expertly defends the Old Testament against the charge of male chauvinism. Professor Tribble does not deny that the main framework of the Bible is patriarchal, but she discerns in it the seeds of transcendence. She points out that the God of the Old Testament, though ostensibly male, is often given female characteristics, being described (especially by Isaiah) as a midwife, nurse, and mother. Women played a special part in the liberation from Egypt: the midwives, Pharaoh's daughter, Miriam. "A patriarchal religion which creates and preserves such feminist traditions contains resources for overcoming patriarchy," according to Professor Tribble, who thus sees the Song not as a reversal of the patriarchal atmosphere of the rest of the Hebrew Bible, but as the logical outcome of "depatriarchalizing" trends found elsewhere. The poem, in her view, portrays the true unfallen nature of sexual relationships, and is a realistic (not eschatological) picture of possible equality between the sexes.

It might be added to Professor Tribble's case that the capacity for sexual initiative shown by the Shulamite is by no means an isolated instance in the Hebrew Bible. In the story of Tamar and Judah, and also in the story of Ruth and Boaz, the same kind of female initiative is shown, and in each case, the outcome is a child who becomes the ancestor of a royal and messianic line. One is re-

minded of the saying of the Talmud: "A woman who initiates intercourse with her husband will bear children as great as the generation of the Wilderness"—a saying which is hastily qualified, but which bears witness to the esoteric knowledge within the Jewish patriarchal tradition of a different tradition which had to come into play when it was time for history to assume heroic stature.

THE allegorical interpretations of the Midrash and Targum are, at their worst, ridiculous, but at their best they perform the feat of spiritualizing the text without destroying its erotic quality. The supreme example, however, of the kind of interpretation that does not replace the human expression of love but transcends it in such a way that human love itself achieves a new dimension is to be found in the Kabbalah, and particularly in the *Zohar*. Here we find the "depatriarchalizing trends" of the Bible brought to their ultimate conclusion in a glorification of sexuality and of female sexuality in particular.

The Song is taken by the *Zohar* to represent not so much the love affair between God and Israel as the love affair between God and His own female aspect, the *Shekhinah*. This kind of interpretation can retain the whole human aspect of the Song as a passionate exchange between human lovers but at the same time render the work as a mystical poem detailing the union of the male and female aspects of God. For that union is figured, in any case, in the union between man and woman on earth. The analogy between human and divine sexual union is part of the biblical assertion (on which the whole Kabbalah forms a commentary) that man was made in the image of God, "man" being not only the male human being but the whole human reality of male and female and their yearning for oneness.

The Kabbalah's profound and daring interpretation of the Song is not entirely opposed to the traditional type of allegorical interpretation; for the *Shekhinah*, the female aspect of God, is identified on one level with Israel, the community of God, or with a kind of heavenly representative of that community. Man is both the image of God, reflecting divine reality, and the love-object of God; even more complicatedly, he promotes the divine union of God with the *Shekhinah*/Israel by the quality of his own sexual relationships on earth. The effect of this combination of parallel and direct unions is to validate human sex as an act of cosmic importance in itself, and not merely as a convenient metaphor for something supraterrrestrial.

The medieval Christian interpretation of the Song in terms of the love between God and the Virgin Mary has something in common with the kabbalistic approach, and yet is also profoundly different, since it does not imply any validation of human

sexuality. This is an area of contrast that Pope fails to explore, though he does have much to say about similarities between the Virgin Mary and the *Shekhinah*. In general, Pope does not sufficiently distinguish between Jewish and Christian exegesis on the question of sexuality, tending to equate too easily things that are only superficially similar.

The case of the Virgin Mary is an example of this. The tremendous emphasis on her virginity serves to mark the gulf between her union with God and all human sexual activity. Against this, Pope points out that such ancient goddesses as Anat, Inanna, and Diana are also occasionally described as virgins, while at the same time engaging in continual sexual activity. Even the *Shekhinah*, Pope points out, is sometimes called a Virgin in the *Zohar*. But here he misses an important difference of tone. The virginity of Mary is a denial of sex, while the virginity of the pagan goddesses and of the *Shekhinah* serves to bring out the continual freshness of their sexual activity—every sexual encounter has a primal quality. Pope himself makes no attempt to explain the mythological combination of sexual activity and virginity, apparently regarding this paradox as an inexplicable feature of the mythopoetic mind. Nor does he heed the axiom that the meaning of a mythological motif lies in its sociological role. In Christianity, the virginity of Mary validates the virtue of celibacy, while in paganism and Judaism, celibacy is not a virtue at all.

THE interesting question that now arises is whether the kabbalistic doctrine is in fact a throwback to paganism. Does the discovery of a divine love affair between the male and female aspects of God amount to a resuscitation of pagan mythology, with its sexualization of deity and its stories of the love of gods and goddesses? Raphael Patai, who pioneered the discussion of this issue in *The Hebrew Goddess* (1967), certainly comes to the conclusion (or rather takes it for granted) that the Kabbalah, and the *Zohar* in particular, does represent a throwback to pagan mythology, and finds strong similarities between the *Shekhinah* and such goddesses as Anat, Astarte, and Kali, as well as the Christian goddess, the Virgin Mary. Marvin Pope devotes several pages to a summary of Patai's book, and finds his insights of great use in developing his own theory of the Song. It is a little disappointing, therefore, that Pope does not follow the matter through by including a treatment of the *Zohar's* interpretation of the Song in his commentary.

Patai's view of the *Shekhinah* as a goddess on the pagan model, a return of that goddess after over a thousand years of patriarchal repression, gives the *Zohar's* interpretation of the Song a "cultic" air that is surprisingly up-to-date. For the view of the Song that used to shock religious tradi-

tionalists—that it is merely a secular composition which had been wrongly given a religious interpretation and so inadvertently included in the canon of the Bible—is now itself outmoded. This "secular" interpretation has a fairly complicated history. It can be traced as far back as Theodore of Mopsuestia of the 5th century, who suggested that the Song was an epithalamium composed for Solomon's marriage to the daughter of Pharaoh. In modern times, there have been various "dramatic" interpretations that have tried to fit the scenes of the Song into a scenario. There is a "three-character" (plus chorus) scenario, in which the heroine is wooed by King Solomon but remains faithful to her shepherd lover; and a "two-character" scenario, in which King Solomon is the hero and succeeds in the end in winning the love of his shepherdess. (These secular dramatic interpretations could be given a religious twist, according to taste, by endowing the story with a moral, such as the virtue of monogamy, or of true love.)

The dramatic interpretations of the Song were then by and large cast aside for a kind of sociological model, according to which the Song is a wedding entertainment, arising from the Near Eastern custom of singing songs in praises of the bride and bridegroom. But even this model has had its day. An important factor in its supersession has been the new realization of the great antiquity of the Song. Gone are the views that the poem belongs to a Persian or Hellenistic environment (the linguistic arguments have all fallen away). The discovery of Ugaritic literature has shown that the poetic idioms and rhythms of the Song are very old indeed, and this makes it all the more likely that it has an origin in pagan religion, and that its praise of a majestic female, "terrible as an army with banners," has to do with the worship of a goddess, and with the mythic and ritual celebration of her love affair with a god.

Yet before we accept the *Zohar* as a delayed confirmation of the pagan cultic origins of the Song, there are certain important points to be made. It is simplistic to regard the *Zohar* as a mere recrudescence of pagan mythology. It is as if one were to equate Picasso's paintings with the primitive works of art which at various times proved an inspiration to him; in a sense, Picasso did experience a "throwback," but in another sense his paintings are worlds apart from the primitive, being an ultra-sophisticated reaction to the primitive. In the maturation of an individual person, it is necessary at a certain period to repress infantile modes of imagination and desire, and to concentrate on acquiring adult skills and attitudes. When this battle has been won, it may be possible to recoup some of the incidental losses by a willed reversion to the brighter perspectives of childhood. This is the aim of romantic movements in art and literature—though there is always the danger, in such movements of a catastrophic relapse or

"regression" into infantilism or psychosis, if the adult control is still insecure.

The mythology of the *Zohar* is certainly similar, in many respects, to pagan mythologies of heavenly families; but in other respects it is entirely different. Most strikingly, mythology in the *Zohar* is not the foreground of religion (as it was in genuinely childlike religion) but an inner, esoteric truth imparted only to those who have mastered the rational, adult system of the Talmud, and who will therefore not be thrown off balance by their initiation into mystery. A mythology within a firm context of monotheism and rationalism is a very different thing from primitive paganism.

Recent scholarship has pointed out the error of a previous generation of anthropologists who discovered "parallels" between the myths of one civilization and another without placing these myths within their sociological and structural context. Raphael Patai's study of the "Hebrew goddess," valuable as it is in displaying a wealth of mythology in Judaism that most people have never suspected, is old-fashioned in its noting of parallels without regard for the dimension that mythological motifs may acquire within a more mature pattern. In order to account for the supposed recrudescence of primitive mythologizing in Judaism, Patai has to overstress the idea of the Kabbalah as a popular, folkish phenomenon, when in fact it was largely transmitted by the learned.

Marvin Pope accepts Patai's presentation uncritically. So far is Pope from understanding the maturity of kabbalistic mysticism, and its rootedness in rationality, that he even suggests at one point that the expeditions to the fields made by the Lurianic mystics of Safed on Sabbath eves to greet the Sabbath Bride were in fact sexual orgies. This is to confuse classical Kabbalism with its later degenerate forms in Sabbateanism and Frankism. Classical Kabbalism is an expression of what might be called post-rational mythology, of which there are perhaps few other examples in the history of religion, though there are parallels of a kind in literature and art, in those romantic movements that seek to preserve and deepen, rather than to jettison, the previous gains of classical rationality.

BUT while the *Zohar* is certainly not a work of primitive mythology, what about the Song of Songs itself? It is a tenable theory that the Song was originally a pagan religious poem about the love of deities (possibly Baal and Anat), and that it was incorporated into the Bible, in a somewhat altered and disguised form, because it was felt obscurely to have an important esoteric meaning (perhaps connected with the entwined male and female cherubim in the Holy of Holies). What was open in other religions, in Judaism had to be kept hidden and repressed, waiting for the time when it could

be revealed without danger to monotheism. On this theory, there must have been a clear identification, in the original pagan version, of the lovers as a god and a goddess. These figures, in the Hebrew version, would then have been reduced to human size, with enough remaining of their numinous presence to give rise to the meditations first of the allegorists, and then of the mystics. The difficulties and abrupt transitions of the poem, on this theory, can often be explained as the result of the adaptation of a pagan work, intended for use in polytheistic rites, for inclusion in a monotheistic Bible.

There is much in the Song for which this "cultic" interpretation gives a plausible explanation. For example, the description of the beloved makes her appear huge: "Your neck like an ivory tower . . . your nose like towering Lebanon, overlooking Damascus." The description of the male beloved makes him appear to be a statue: "His arms rods of gold, studded with gems; his loins smoothest ivory, encrusted with sapphires. His legs marble pillars, based on sockets of gold." The encounter of the female with the guards, who ill-use her, is reminiscent of the story of Ishtar, who encounters hostile guards during her descent into the underworld in search of the lost Tammuz. In addition to previously known literary parallels in Sumerian writings, Pope has found many interesting parallels in Ugaritic literature which throw light on the love expressions of the Song; all these parallels relate to love between deities, not humans.

Pope's own special contribution to the "cultic" theory is startling. He argues that the poem, or collection of poems (as he prefers to regard it), relates not so much to a divine marriage as to the rites performed at funerals. The key verse, in his opinion, is "Love is as strong as death" (8: 6), which marks the theme that death can be counteracted only by the vivifying force of sex. In Near Eastern funeral rites, a sexual orgy had the function of asserting the power of life. The orgy was accompanied by heavy drinking (an element preserved in the Irish wake). All this often took place in specially constructed funeral gardens—which accounts, in Pope's view, for some of the Song's references to a garden.

Pope argues his case with force and learning, as one would expect. Personally, however, I do not find it convincing. He seems to attach too much weight to isolated expressions. For example, the phrase, "I am dark but comely," gives rise to vast erudition on his part concerning black goddesses of mythology, from the Indian Kali to the Black Virgin of certain Christian churches. This is related by him to the description of the female as "terrible with banners" (or "awesome with trophies," in Pope's translation), and is explained as describing the goddess in her savage, warlike aspect. It is too much to base on one phrase. Even the allegedly key expression, "Love is as strong as

death," hardly seems appropriate for the task Pope assigns to it. After all, the Hebrew word for "strong" here (*'azah*) really means "harsh" rather than "mighty," so that the expression as a whole seems more suited to valedictory sadness or frustrated desire than to an assertion of the cosmic power of love as a remedy for death. Similarly, Pope builds his whole case for an element of orgiastic drinking in the Song on one word (5: 1), "be drunk" (*shikhru*). The question is what degree of drunkenness is indicated by this word. By a Ugaritic parallel concerning the god El, Pope endeavors to show that the verb signifies a condition of extreme, helpless inebriation. He discounts a contrary argument based on Haggai 1: 6, and overlooks a very relevant text (Genesis 43: 34), where the verb clearly means "to be merry" rather than "to be helplessly drunk." The evidence is not strong enough for Pope's thesis, interesting as it is.

I would not be at all surprised if the next development in the history of exegesis of the Song were a return to naturalism. There is already a sign of this in a recent article by Chaim Rabin (summarized by Pope). Rabin has found a parallel to the unusual female-centeredness of the Song, together with its strong feeling for nature, in the Indian poetry in the Tamil language, known as Sangam poetry. This was written about 1000 B.C.E. and could have become known in Israel through Solomon's contacts with India. (The Hebrew word for aloes, *ahalot*, used in the Song, is actually derived from India.) The Sangam poetry of female yearning probably arose because of the long absences of the men engaged in the spice trade, which took Indian merchants to South Arabia and thence to the lands of the Fertile Crescent. Rabin even concludes that the male beloved of the Song is himself a spice trader, his long-awaited homecoming being described in the lines (3: 6): "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?" (The word "this," unfortunately, is feminine, but Rabin explains that it refers to the caravan, not the person.)

Rabin's interpretation of the Song is not, to be sure, entirely naturalistic, for he suggests that the Tamil literary model was used by the Hebrew poet of the Song for a religious purpose: to express the longing of the pious for God, at least as an extra dimension. Yet this religious overtone existed in Tamil poetry too, for the female yearning for the god Krishna acted as counterpoint to the human longing for the absent male.

ONE wonders whether it is time to revive the old theory (long scorned by scholars) that the Song is in fact an epithalamium of Solomon's marriage to an Egyptian princess, the daughter of Pharaoh. If the bride were of royal status, this would account for her sense of equality with the bridegroom. It would also account for

her dark complexion, and for her addressing the "daughters of Jerusalem" as a group of which she is not a member.

A difficulty with this theory is that there are strong hints in the Song of an illicit or irregular character to the love affair (the disapproval of the "brothers," the hostility of the "guards," etc.). Marriage does not appear to be the object of the lovers, nor is there any mention of procreation or the desire to found a dynasty. The love affair, consummated in the fields and with the disapproval of society, appears to defy convention, and to be entirely the outcome of natural passion, rather than the demands of society or diplomacy. I myself would suggest, therefore—very tentatively—that the poem may concern not the daughter of Pharaoh but the Queen of Sheba, with whom, according to legend, Solomon had an unofficial romance. The story of this romance appears in Jewish literature only in a late Midrash; yet the Bible seems to hint at it strongly in the expression, "he gave her all her desire." The Ethiopian tradition that assigns to the romance of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba the origin of the Ethiopian royal house may well be of great antiquity.

If the female of the Song was an independent queen, many of the features that have led commentators to regard her as a goddess can be understood. For queens were often described in terms appropriate to a goddess. For example, the famous queen of Egypt, Hatshepsut, was described as follows: "The best of myrrh is upon all her limbs, her fragrance is divine dew, her odor is mingled with the Holy Land, her skin is gilded with electrum, shining as do the stars."* The parallels between this and the Song are obvious.

The Queen of Sheba would clearly fit the description, "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness . . . with all the powders of the merchant?"—and without any need to find a forced accommodation for the feminine word, "this." For the Queen of Sheba was strongly associated with spices. She gave to Solomon "a very great store of spices . . . there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the Queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon."

According to the theory of Immanuel Velikovsky (which I find convincing), the Queen of Sheba was in fact identical with Queen Hatshepsut of Egypt (this identification is part of Velikovsky's far-reaching revision of the accepted chronology of Egyptian history). Josephus calls the Queen of Sheba "the queen of Egypt and Ethiopia," and Hatshepsut actually did rule Ethiopia as well as Egypt. The similarity of the above-quoted description of Hatshepsut to the expressions of the Song may thus be no coincidence.

* J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, Vol. 2, Sec. 274. An interesting example in Western literature of a queen compared to a goddess is Enobarbus's description of Cleopatra in Shakespeare's play.

HOWEVER this particular theory may be, the Song does seem to contain a natural human element unaccounted for in the "cultic" theory. We have a picture of a prosperous land, in which the beauty of both nature and art is appreciated, and human potentialities have great scope. If this is not actually the reign of Solomon, the atmosphere of that reign is most imaginatively evoked. Is it not possible that a court poet of Solomon, using poetic skills derived from Tamil, Phoenician, or Egyptian models, wrote a poem of human love, portraying a relationship of equality which, even in that period, could be attained only by royal personages (and by them, only with difficulty and opposition), but which provided a pattern for all time?

The poem avoids all reference to religion, even omitting entirely the name of God (the one apparent exception is a textual corruption). Yet only monotheism could have provided such release from superstitious anxiety and opened up such a vista of fulfilled humanity and nature. The human figures are in the foreground, just as in the Bible as a whole the figures of human beings, engaged in human activities, have taken the place of the gods and demi-gods that fill pagan literature. Such a picture has deep religious resonances, and these it continued to awaken throughout the ages, culminating in a cosmic validation of human sexual love in the *Zohar*. But the distinctive note of luminous confident humanism is not found again, except perhaps in the Golden Age of Spain, when it was indeed the Song of Songs that acted as the inspiration for a school of love poetry in which human love attained religious stature without requiring a framework of mysticism, mythology, or magic.*

There is one commentator on the Song whom Marvin Pope, strangely enough, fails to mention. It is Max Brod, the friend and editor of Kafka. In his book, *Paganism, Christianity, Judaism*, Brod included an analysis of the Song. The analysis is not in itself remarkable, being a variant on the three-character dramatic theory, involving extensive reordering of the material of the Song. But Brod makes one shrewd comment which is worth repeating. He says that the "cultic" theory is in essence (and at times overtly) anti-Semitic, since it is based on the idea that equality of the sexes is an idea impossible in Judaism and more or less invented by Christianity; the apparently equal status of the sexes in the Song, therefore, must arise from a pagan source concerned with a god and a goddess. Now this point obviously does not apply in the least to Marvin Pope; yet it is of importance in assessing the original motivation and *sitz im leben* of the "cultic" theory.

It is certainly a paradox that Judaism, a patriarchal religion, contains so many anti-patriarchal elements. But this is what makes Judaism such a subtle religion. Judaism is not an uneasy patriarchalism, like Christianity, carrying on a secret war against its own matriarchal aspects. It is a patriarchalism that glories in its achievements, and yet carries at its heart the possibility of its own transcendence. Throughout the ages, one of the crucial texts in this entire process of self-understanding and self-transcendence has been the Song of Songs.

* For a description of the delicate balance between human and divine love in Spanish-Hebrew poetry, in relation to the Song of Songs, see Neal Kozodoy, "Reading Medieval Hebrew Love Poetry," *AJS Review*, Vol. 2, 1977, pp. 111-129.

Liberation Theology and the Pope

Michael Novak

ON HIS highly publicized voyage to Mexico late in January 1979, Karol Wojtyla, only recently become Pope John Paul II, faced two systems of authoritarianism. He faced Latin American feudal regimes of a cruelty well known to the bishops he was about to address, some of whom had experienced prison themselves. And he faced a rising enthusiasm, particularly on the part of foreign-trained Latin American clergymen, for "Marxist liberation."

The Pope addressed the Conference of Latin American Bishops (CELAM) at Puebla on January 28. At first his 8,000-word sermon drew words of disappointment and sarcasm from many of the "liberation theologians" he was taken to be attacking. Then began a process by which the Pope's straight sentences were gradually softened and transmuted until, we were told by the *New York Times* (February 18), the theologians in question celebrated the end of the conference by drinking beer, singing "folk songs from all over the continent," so that "well past midnight their songs echoed through the streets . . . sounding suspiciously like a victory celebration." What had actually happened? Had the Pope attacked "liberation theology" or had he given it official sanction?

The meeting at Puebla was the third major meeting of CELAM in twenty-five years. At the first one in Rio de Janeiro, the bishops of Latin America had established a continent-wide organization. Over the years, they formulated some fairly clear views about their own special needs and the general need for a reorganization of the international church. Thus, at the Second Vatican Council (1961-65), their regional unity was already conspicuous, and their interventions helped the "progressive" forces at the Council do much more than expected. Then in 1968—the year of vast student unrest in the United States, Mexico, France, and elsewhere—the bishops met for the second time, at Medellin, Colombia, and produced a document that addressed the public-policy needs of the continent. Tinged with Marxist rhetoric, that document gave rise, two years later, to the first writings self-described as "liberation theology," that is, formal attempts to translate Chris-

tianity into Marxist categories. Works in this genre have multiplied since.

Pope John Paul II went straight to the heart of all this in the opening paragraphs of his address at Puebla. He said immediately that his "point of departure" was "the conclusions of Medellin" as well as the sympathetic support of those conclusions by Pope Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. But he did not hesitate to qualify his praise of "all the positive elements" that the Medellin conclusions contained, with the warning that he was not about to ignore the "incorrect interpretations at times made and which call for calm discernment, opportune criticism, and clear choices of position."

The misconception, the confusion which the Pope wished to sweep away was that Christianity is reducible to Marxist categories. He opposed those "rereadings" of the Gospel that "cause confusion by diverging from the central criteria of the faith of the Church." He opposed those for whom "the Kingdom of God is emptied of its full content and is understood in a rather secularist sense," as if it were to be reached "by mere changing of structures and social and political involvement, and as being present wherever there is a certain type of involvement and activity for justice." And he particularly opposed those who "claim to show Jesus as politically committed, as one who fought against Roman oppression and the authorities, and also as one involved in the class struggle. This idea of Christ as a political figure, a revolutionary, as the subversive man from Nazareth, does not tally with the Church's catechesis."

The Pope observed that "our age is the one in which man has been most written and spoken of," yet it is also "the age of man's abasement to previously unsuspected levels, the age of human values trampled on as never before." Like Solzhenitsyn in his commencement address at Harvard last year, Pope John Paul II attributed this to "the inexorable paradox of atheistic humanism." By contrast, "the primordial affirmation of [Catholic] anthropology is that man is God's image and cannot be reduced to a mere portion of nature or a nameless element in the human city." He rejected a "strictly economic, biological, or psychological view of man," insisting instead that "the complete truth about the human being constitutes the foundation of the Church's social teaching and

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the basis of true liberation. In the light of this truth, man is not a being subjected to economic or political processes, these processes are instead directed to man and subjected to him." It is necessary, in short, to reject a materialist interpretation of history and to defend the primacy of the spiritual.

At this point, Pope John Paul II showed himself in consonance with the traditional political philosophies of Western civilization. Tocqueville, for example, had made a similar observation: "There is no religion which does not place the object of man's desire above and beyond the treasures of the earth, and which does not naturally raise his soul to regions far above those of the senses. Nor is there any which does not impose on man some sort of duties to his mind, and thus draws him at times from the contemplation of himself." Correspondingly, the Pope discerned in "human dignity a gospel value that cannot be despised without greatly offending the Creator," and then launched one of his two explicit condemnations of Latin American practices:

This dignity is infringed on the individual level when due regard is not had for values such as freedom, the right to essential goods, to life . . . it is infringed on the social and political level when man cannot exercise his right of participation, or when he is subjected to unjust and unlawful coercion, or submitted to physical or mental torture, etc. I am not unaware of how many questions are being posed in this sphere today in Latin America.

The Pope then turned to problems of action. The mission of the Church, he said, "although it is religious and not social or political, cannot fail to consider man in the entirety of his being." This mission "has as an essential part action for justice and the tasks of the advancement of man." But the Church "does not need to have recourse to ideological systems in order to love, defend, and collaborate in the liberation of man . . . acting in favor of brotherhood, justice, and peace, and against all foes of domination, slavery, discrimination, violence, attacks on religious liberty, and aggression against man, and whatever attacks life." The Church has a commitment, like Christ's, "to the most needy. In fidelity to this commitment, the Church wishes to stay free with regard to the competing systems, in order to opt only for man."

The Pope then went on to define liberation in a Christian way, first positively, and then with this negative: "Liberation . . . in the framework of the Church's proper mission is not reduced to the simple and narrow economic, political, social, or cultural dimension, and is not sacrificed to the demands of any strategy, practice, or short-term solution." The important thing is "to safeguard the originality of Christian liberation," and "to avoid any form of curtailment or ambiguity" which would cause the Church to "lose her fundamental meaning" and leave her open to "manipulation by ideological systems and political parties."

WHAT is the liberation theology to which the Pope so clearly addressed himself? The headquarters for liberation theology in the United States, and perhaps in the entire world, are located near the Hudson River at Maryknoll, New York, international center of America's most active missionary order, the Maryknoll Fathers and Sisters. In a recent bibliography of Third World theologies, 32 of 82 titles were published by Maryknoll's Orbis Press. Founded in 1970, Orbis announced that it "draws its imperatives from and orders its priorities on the fact that the majority of Christians live in the affluent countries of the North Atlantic community, which controls almost 80 per cent of the world's resources but accounts for only 20 per cent of the world's population. . . . Christians bear a heavy responsibility for a world that can annually 'afford' to spend \$150 billion on arms, but can scarcely scrape together \$10 billion for economic and social development." At the heart of the matter, according to the initial Orbis release, was the need for a change in intellectual focus: "Total development will demand the restructuring of oppressive political and social orders wherever they exist, in Calcutta or Chicago, New York or Recife. For this reason, the word *development* should be replaced by *liberation*."

It is quite remarkable that the list of cities requiring liberation did not include Cracow or Leningrad, Havana or Peking, Hanoi or Prague. The complete Orbis catalogue of 141 titles, as of the end of 1978, maintains this distinction intact.* Thirty-nine titles are concentrated on Latin America, a few on Africa and other places, none on Communist lands, even though such lands were once the target of intensive missionary effort.

The focus on Latin America is not accidental. Liberation theology is mainly, although not entirely, a product of the Spanish-speaking world. Father Sergio Torres of Chile, lecturer at Maryknoll, describes his world view and that of his fellow Latin American theologians in this way:

What we understand is that we are at the end of a stage in the history of the world. Europe and Western society is no longer making the history of the world as it has been since the Roman empire. We understand that history is now being made by the peoples of the Third World. The oil crisis is getting that through here in the United States. . . . We in Latin America are the only continent that is both Christian and underdeveloped, so we are in a special place. We will start a new understanding of the faith because we belong to the churches, Catholic and Protestant, and are living in a situation which makes them functional to the system. . . . The process of colonization, liber-

* Incidentally, in a recent collection of essays about liberation theology and oppressed groups, not a word is said about Catholics from Eastern Europe, or Lebanon or Ireland or Armenia. See *Mission Trends* #4, edited by Thomas S. Stransky and Gerald H. Andersen, Paulist Press, 1979.

ation, and organization is best understood in Marxist terms.

Father Miguel D'Escoto, a Nicaraguan, the director of communications at Maryknoll, adds:

As Latin Americans, we know capitalism in a way young people here don't know it. We had no New Deal, no Roosevelt to come along and soften it up. Capitalism is intrinsically wrong at its base. The basic concept is that man is selfish, and being realistic, we should accept this and cater to it rather than change it.

The chief systematizer of liberation theology, Father Juan Luis Segundo, whose five-volume treatise, *Theology for Artisans of a New Humanity*, has sold 64,000 copies, recently told a group of American Jesuits:

There is no perfect solution. The only way is for us to choose between two oppressions. And the history of Marxism, even oppressive, offers right now more hope than the history of existing capitalism. . . . Marx did not create the class struggle, international capitalism did.

The most widely read of all the liberation theologians is Father Gustavo Gutierrez of Peru, whose *A Theology of Liberation* (Orbis) has sold 45,000 copies. He writes:

It is undeniable that the class struggle plants problems for the universality of Christian love and church unity. But every consideration on this matter ought to begin with two elemental attestations: class struggle is a fact and neutrality in this matter is impossible.

But it is not merely the theologians and the priests of Latin America who have looked upon Marxism with favor. Distinguished bishops, like the Bishop of Cuernavaca, Arceo Mendez, and the Archbishop of Recife, Dom Helder Camara, have been unambiguous in their preference for Marxism. Archbishop Camara, for example, addressed the University of Chicago's celebration of the Seventh Centenary of St. Thomas Aquinas in these terms:

When a man, whether philosopher or not, attracts irresistibly millions of human beings, especially young people; when a man becomes the inspiration for life and for death of a great part of humanity, and makes the powerful of the earth tremble with hate and fear, this man deserves to be studied. . . . As the University of Chicago chose to take upon herself the responsibility of celebrating St. Thomas Aquinas's Seventh Centenary, we have the right to suggest that the best way to honor the centenary . . . should be for the University of Chicago to try, today, to do with Karl Marx what St. Thomas, in his day, did with Aristotle.

THE social and intellectual background of the liberation theologians is germane to their views. When I was studying theology in Rome at the Gregorian University in 1956-58, I became familiar with some of the Latin

American and Spanish seminarians, and several clear impressions about their political-theological culture fixed themselves in my mind. First, it was obvious that they chafed under the image of Latin cultures which prevailed in the English-speaking world. They were, they felt, the victims of an Anglo-Saxon ethnocentric bias, a Protestant bias to boot, and a bias informed by the sort of individualism, pragmatism, and materialism they found especially abhorrent. Some seemed, in effect, to be still carrying in mind the long-ago defeat of the Spanish Armada in much the same way some Southerners recall the humiliation of defeat in the Civil War.

Many of these bright young men studied not only in Rome but in Belgium, and France, and Germany as well. There they shared in what was then known as *nouvelle theologie*—that contemporary reaction against Thomism, strong on Scriptural studies and "salvation history," intensely preoccupied with the renewal of the Church from biblical and patristic sources (and hostile to the theory of Christian democracy developed by Thomists like Jacques Maritain). On their return to Latin America, many of them became involved in the movements organizing peasants in credit unions and agrarian cooperatives. Much of their earlier training seemed far too theological, and they reacted with a veritably Oedipal vehemence against their European teachers.

Yet in their work among the peasants, many found themselves already upstaged by Marxist organizers; as for the sophisticated French and German theology they brought to the peasants, it served little useful purpose. So the younger clergy began to attend more intently to the indigenous piety of the people. They discovered the power of popular religion. In its quiet endurance and strength, they found new theological resources—resources, moreover, which served to differentiate them from the despised Yankee experts and technicians who imported into Latin America the strange and threatening concepts of "development," capitalist-style. In expressing their resentment of the Northern experts, such activists have had no better spokesman than the brilliant but erratic Ivan Illich of Cuernavaca, whose anti-institutional reflections have become so popular in radical circles in North America.

When the Latin American liberation theologians speak of "class struggle," they are thinking primarily of the struggle within feudalism of landholders and peasants, hardly at all of the classic Marxist picture of an industrial proletariat. (What Latin Americans persist in calling "capitalism" is, in Latin America, largely a form of syndicalism or corporatism, which descends from the rights given by the Spanish or Portuguese crown to certain large landholders or adventurers and constitutes virtual monopoly or state mercantilism.) Both the Industrial Revolution and the social revolution that would have broken the power of the traditional landholders, as the

Glorious Revolution did in Great Britain, have hardly been known among them. In most of Latin America, the middle class is quite small, and "bourgeois values," of the sort well-established in the North Atlantic world, scarcely exist.

The full effect of the Protestant spirit of dissent and individual conscience has thus not been felt in Latin cultures. By the same token, the compensating social forces of pragmatic compromise, voluntary association, and cooperative fellow-feeling that characterize Anglo-American individualism are equally missing in Latin American politics. Latin forms of idealism and romanticism make for acute political fractionalization. There is in Latin America little scope for the entrepreneur, for invention, for enterprise. There are few Horatio Algiers. The virtues most celebrated—honor, nobility, dignity—are the opposite of bourgeois.

The system confronted by Latin American Catholics is one of entrenched inequality, in which powerful landholders (often of early Spanish stock) have power and privileges far removed from those of peasants and workers (often of Indian stock). The Latin American elites lack those traditions of service, stewardship, and public-spiritedness that within the United States have softened the impact of economic elites upon political life. The lower classes in Latin America have had little opportunity to develop the political consciousness which has characterized the Anglo-Saxon yeoman for several centuries, and have scarcely shared in the traditions of "the rights of Englishmen" which have affected Anglo-Saxon consciousness.

The picture is further clouded by the powerful traditions of a strong, authoritarian military. In many Latin American countries, a military career has offered ambitious youngsters more opportunities for higher education and advancement than any other profession. Not infrequently, the military provides leaders of idealistic tendencies both on the socialist and on the democratic side. In recent years, however, military regimes have grown more "modern" in precisely the least humane ways: in the techniques of cruel repression.

All this, moreover, takes place in an environment in which European ideologies—both the Fascism of the World War II era, and the Marxism of Stalin's time—exist not merely as abstract theories, but as embodied political forces. In such an environment, the theological idealist is often forced to take sides, to throw in his lot with one or another active organization. In many places, there are few organized alternatives of the middle, liberal, democratic way.

THUS it was that in 1968, the second Conference of Latin American Bishops at Medellin legitimized not only the normal preaching of the Church about social conscience ("the formation of Christian conscience") and not only the classical, peaceful tactics of social re-

form (labor unions, credit unions, cooperatives, and the like), but also the bald use of Marxist categories. It did so in a context in which instances of armed insurrection by a few "guerrilla priests"—not simply as chaplains but as active combatants—were occurring, and in which the public-policy elites of the continent, especially the university intelligentsia, were already deeply immersed in Marxist thought.

But in what sense are the liberation theologians Marxist? None of them shows evidence that he has actually studied Marx, the social systems derived from Marxist thought, or the literature assessing socialist experiments. They do not, apparently, believe in the total abolition of private property (the principle Marx offered as a pithy summary of his theory). They claim not to be materialists. They are not atheists. They say that they are not totalitarians, as Castro is. They surely do not hold—since few Marxists today do—that economic gains for the poor are empirically to be achieved through the nationalization of major industries. It is doubtful whether they believe in the humane quality of the authoritarian, bureaucratic state which is the natural outgrowth of socialism. It is not clear that they are ready to impose equality, to command choices of what society and individuals "need," to insist upon planning by technical experts, or to repress private initiatives.

Nevertheless, there do seem to be two senses in which they are Marxists. Repeatedly, liberation theologians insist that they are Marxists "because the people are." By this they do not mean that "the people" have ever read Marx or know much about him but a few slogans. But the slogans are the point. If it is difficult to take liberation theologians seriously as theoreticians of Marxism, one can grant that they are "populist Marxists," using Marxist slogans to ventilate some of the frustrations and aggressions of people whose aspirations have long been colored by external propaganda.

There is a second sense in which they are Marxists. Marxism in Latin America is not just a theory. It is a well-financed, well-organized political institution, with parties, officials, printing presses, secret agents, operatives, intellectual sympathizers, international connections, and designated politicians. To be a Marxist, as the liberation theologians say, is not merely to hold a theory but to be committed to a "praxis." Yet the innocence with which the liberation theologians are committed to the Marxist "praxis" speaks volumes.

Marxist "praxis" is something of which the world has had some experience—but one would not know it from the writings of the liberation theologians. The literature of liberation theology, which is rich in general allegations about "capitalist" practice, is silent when it comes to the empirical evidence of how Marxist regimes operate. Since almost three-quarters of the world's nations are, officially, Marxist in design, and since most have had upward of thirty years to prove

themselves, it should not have been beyond the capacity of theologians to work out an assessment, even a theological assessment, of their actual daily "praxis," and judge these in the light of the gospels. But this the liberation theologians have conspicuously not done.

In recounting the experience of the "poor and the oppressed" of the Third World, strange gaps appear in the empirical reasoning of liberation theologians. No notice is taken of those Third World nations whose annual rate of economic growth borders on 10 per cent—nations like Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea, Singapore, whose secrets in overcoming poverty are open to inspection. No empirical survey of the comparative inequalities between elites and the poor is made as between socialist and capitalist regimes. Little attention is paid to measurements of institutional respect for human dignity and liberties, as, for example, between South Korea and North Korea.

There are other strange gaps in empirical knowledge. Bishop Helder Camara, in his youth a Fascist as in his maturity a Marxist, is constant in his criticism of liberal democracies. He is especially fond of the suggestion that a small fraction of mankind uses a large fraction of the earth's resources, and that poverty results for millions. Is this in fact true? A special kind of human culture is required for the production of wealth. Not every organization of society or culture is suited to such production. Indeed, only a small fraction of the earth's population *produces* the larger part of the world's wealth. Besides, many of the earth's resources were unknown even a century ago, or no use for them—hence no value—had yet been found. In fact, Latin America is immensely rich in resources, now that other cultures have discovered their secrets and learned their uses.

It is not empirically true, either, that "the poor are getting poorer." In longevity, medical care, and nutrition, the modern production of wealth has raised the levels of the entire population of the world by unprecedented annual increments over the last fifty years. Average personal incomes have also risen annually, in Latin America even more than in Asia or Africa. If the present organization of the production of wealth is "sinful," what shall we say of rival Marxist systems, which are not raising the levels of the poor by so much?

CATHOLIC theologians, especially those who claim to speak for "liberation," have a duty to study how liberation has, in fact, been attained in human history, and by what empirical and practical means its scope can be extended. If such a study were undertaken dispassionately and in good faith, I believe it would show that the greatest chances for improving the concrete daily life of human beings everywhere lie with the forces not of Marxist "liberation" but with the forces of democratic capitalism. Others may disagree; but that Catholic social theory has

so far failed even to raise the necessary intellectual questions is a sign of its bankruptcy in this area, and of the extent to which too much of it has, in fact, already fallen hostage to Marxist categories of thought.

In the writings of liberation theologians, the contradictions of Marxist theory and practice go unnoted. And this tells us something about the liberation theologians: they are Marxists not by reason or by experience, but by faith. As Leszek Kolakowski, who (like Pope John Paul II) has lived through the Marxist phenomenon in Poland, has observed: "Almost all the prophecies of Marx and his followers have already proved to be false, but this does not disturb the spiritual certainty of the faithful, any more than it did in the case of chiliastic sects: for it is a certainty not based on any empirical premises or supposed 'historical laws,' but simply on the psychological need for certainty. In this sense Marxism performs the function of a religion, and its efficacy is of a religious character."

In the real world, Marxism has been immobilized for decades as the ideological superstructure of totalitarian states and of parties aspiring to that status. As an explanatory system, Marxism "explains" little. There is nothing in the Latin American system, to which the liberation theologians point, for which Marxism affords the only or the best explanation. It offers no "method" either of inquiry or of action by which modern life is to be better understood, its future predicted, or its utopian hopes realized. Contemporary Marxist literature, as Kolakowski shows, is dogmatic, sterile, helpless, out of touch both with modern economics and with cultural life. But what Marxism does do very well today is to inspire with fantasies of utopian fulfillment, and to license the identification of some malevolent enemy as the only roadblock to that fulfillment. In a quite literal sense, the works of liberation theologians are innocent both of empirical verification and of sophistication about Marxist theory. Their originality lies chiefly in their openness to fantasy.

It is thus hardly surprising that Pope John Paul II's clear-eyed account of Marxism in Puebla proved to have a stronger bite than many Catholics could accept. He attempted to staunch the unthinking fantasies of theologians bent on the creation of totalitarian processes whose consequences they do not allow themselves to foresee and whose dynamics they cannot control. As against this, the Pope maintained the independence and integrity of the Church. He based himself on sound political philosophy. He spoke for the authentic interests of the poor and the oppressed, against those who would transmute their sufferings into envy, hatred, and coercion. He refused to adopt the role of Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor, offering bread in exchange for liberty. For this, even those who are secular have reason to be grateful.

Jerusalem at "Peace"

Edward Grossman

JERUSALEM: On the night of March 26, when a miracle that was half-expected finally took place and a treaty of peace between the Jewish state and Egypt was signed on the lawn of the White House, the weather in Jerusalem was fierce. The wind howled over the mountaintop, the low thunderclouds sped from west to east, hailstones ricocheted off the empty sidewalks. Though Jerusalem is well-supplied with lunatics, there was not one madman dancing in the street.

The municipality, it is true, organized a celebration in the plaza in front of the Western Wall. Mayor Kollek delivered a speech, and Yehudi Menuhin, his fiddle unstrung by the cold, manfully performed Bach for a few hundred shivering listeners, mostly American tourists, while paratroopers kept an eye out. This official rejoicing only emphasized how measured the jubilation of Jerusalem's Jewish majority was. Should the miracle turn out to be a passing fantasy, a trick, another joke, perhaps no one in the world will have a more manageable hangover to deal with than this city's Jews.

It was not the weather alone that kept them at home, and their joy in bounds, even as they sat and watched Sadat, Begin, and Carter put their hands to this fantastic, not-so-amazing document on television. The weather could have been fine, and still there would not have been any party in the street. There are several reasons for this. For one thing, during the five hundred days which elapsed between Sadat's advent in Israel and the signing, everyone was given a chance to get over his happy astonishment. When Sadat stepped

onto the runway at Ben-Gurion airport in November 1977 and proceeded to inspect an Israeli honor guard, you had to blink at the screen—it was like watching the laws of nature in suspension. But the messianic feeling lingered no more than six weeks, that is, until Sadat called his delegation back in January 1978. From then on, the wrestling and hairsplitting over paragraphs and sub-sections, the fight for favor in the White House, the Congress, and the editorial pages of American newspapers, were like the return of old, old themes, vindicating those who had held out against the first rush of happiness, and showing an eventual treaty to be what it is in fact—a human, not a divine, instrument.

Now, one month after the signing, following the observance of a Passover in which the name of Egypt resonated strangely, you may search the streets and alleys in the blinding sunlight without finding anyone who believes the millennium has dawned. Those Jews with strong and definite notions are apt to scoff and warn and prophesy darkly, comparing the priceless airfields and oil deposits and buffer-space of Sinai with the promises of Sadat and Carter, pledges which will soon be exposed as worthless. Wasn't Israel forcibly persuaded by the U.S. to relinquish the very same territory in 1957, in return for assurances, only to be abandoned by the Americans when Nasser closed the Straits of Tiran? Yes, this treaty means war for sure.

What a hard, suspicious breed, the Jews, and none so tough, so wary—not to say perverse—as those in Jerusalem. "*Stony eyes & stony hearts*," Herman Melville noted on his visit to this town. And why not? There is still precious little here to bolster your faith in men, much

less in God. And even supposing that peace should actually break out, it may present a threatening aspect when viewed from certain angles. Tourist agencies organizing the first trips to the Pyramids report that they cannot handle the demand. The idea of at last being accepted as a human being in a neighboring country, even if only as a tourist, rather than rejected as a devil, has its powerful attractions for many Jews in Israel, even those in Jerusalem. The Israelis have been cooped up for a generation in a kind of isolation ward, and most will be glad to be able to get out. Most, but by no means all. Orthodox Judaism in its Europeanized variety holds that Jews should dwell apart, and there are, of course, large numbers of Orthodox Ashkenazim in Jerusalem. Moreover, among unbelieving, unobservant Jews, blond and dark alike, you run across the psychic casualties, those souls who are apprehensive of any change, like people ill or imprisoned for so long that they fear getting well or being released.

Overheard at a bus stop: "Yes, now they'll swallow us, peacefully. Our kids will run off to Egypt and we'll never see them again."

STONY hearts, clannishness, morbid fear notwithstanding, you get the impression that more Jewish Jerusalemities cautiously welcome the treaty than vociferously scorn it. This impressionistic sense is supported by the findings of a poll at Passover-time: 86 per cent of the national sample was reported to believe that full peace with Egypt was coming soon, and 75 per cent said that it would last. Not too curiously, several weeks before Carter's mission to the Middle East in March, roughly the same percentage of Israelis, in another poll, thought that a treaty was not imminent. With Israelis, eternal lively pessimism alternates with bouts of incorrigible hope, and if it is pessimism that generally rules, seldom does it turn to actual despair. In Jerusalem, the percentage of doubters and skeptics in the post-

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signing poll may well have been above the national average—too bad the figures were not broken down by cities. All-Jewish Tel Aviv, with its beach, is easygoing, compared with Jerusalem. And yet, even in Jerusalem, most people, while they are unsure of what will happen next, while they are positive that there is still much trouble in store, seem to be willing to give the treaty a chance. This time, they seem ready to hope, things will be different.

The majority expresses itself tentatively, indirectly, often with symbols rather than words. You see Egyptian and American flags and framed technicolor likenesses of Jimmy Carter hanging in buses and felafl stands, placed there spontaneously by dark-skinned drivers and proprietors who were either born in the Muslim countries or whose parents originated there, and who as a group have always been known for their rough-and-ready, indeed primitive, nationalism, and their mistrust of the Arabs. But Ashkenazim display such symbols, such talismans, also. Next to the scales at the kosher butcher's on the corner, you see a photo of Sadat, Carter, and Begin laughing in front of the White House. This butcher is an Orthodox Jew who somehow survived the Germans in Poland. His wife sits next to the window, knitting. They have one son, an adult who must go to the army reserves for forty days each year. When the butcher in his bloody smock is reminded by a customer that he once called Jimmy Carter an anti-Semite, he answers, "Never mind. Carter's one thing, Begin's another. The treaty is all right."

His meaning may be interpreted easily enough. One of the most familiar scenes of Israeli life is of a father reciting Kaddish over his son's grave, in the military cemetery. The bitterest of Israeli novelists and playwrights have intimated that the fathers have reconciled themselves to the fact of this perversion without excessive agonizing—more than that, that they raise sons to sacrifice them, Abraham going through with the sacrifice of Isaac. This terrible accusation is too cruel and sophisticated by half. And if some of the fathers have had their hearts turned to stone over the years, such does not seem

to be the case with as many of the mothers, even in Jerusalem. Sadat may have spoken with his customary shrewdness when he said that his very best allies in Israel were the mothers, better allies even than the diplomats and politicians who have always dreamed of a separate peace with Egypt.

ALL the more reason, therefore, to resist giving in to happiness—high hopes risk more painful disappointment. Furthermore, everyone knows that peace, or absence of war, with Egypt, even if it lasts, does not mean peace with Israel's other neighbors, not within the next five hundred days at least, and certainly not with the Palestinians. Here is where many of those who cautiously and quietly permit themselves to hope for a good outcome would not be overly surprised if the scoffers, the cynics, the gloomy prophets were proved right. How to solve the everlasting Palestinian problem, short of Xeroxing the country? Begin's notion of "autonomy" for the West Bank and Gaza is evidently not the same as Sadat's, or, more important, Carter's. Autonomy, an idea which Begin himself introduced, signifies something different for everyone. Ironically, it may come to serve as the blueprint for what Begin endlessly declares is the last thing in the world he wants to see—a Palestinian state, more or less governed by the PLO, surrounding Jerusalem on three sides and perhaps even dividing this city again, along a north-south axis bisecting the Temple Mount.

There is something either very grand or very dismaying about how history is working itself out. The conventional wisdom seems indisputable: Gaza will be harder to make a deal for than the Sinai, the West Bank will be many times more difficult than Gaza, and hardest of all will be Jerusalem, for obvious reasons. The fact is, some of the first Arab and Jewish blood of the struggle over Israel/Palestine was spilled at the Western—formerly the Wailing—Wall, and the al-Aqsa mosque right above it on the Temple Mount, in 1920, the weapons then being sticks and daggers. Over the course of fifty-nine years, the tools became more efficient and impersonal, while the contest went

through transformations and sent out ripples reaching the ends of the earth. Now that a peaceful solution is said to be absolutely necessary for the security and prosperity of the planet, the terms of the struggle, its red-hot center, are being uncannily narrowed back down to precisely what they were in 1920—which of the two peoples shall rule this country, and who will have dominion over the Holy Places?

High politics, the operations of universal history, are naturally not the constant concerns of most of the people who find themselves living in Jerusalem, neither the Jews nor the Arabs. Most of them, most of the time, awake or dreaming, try hard and successfully to be absorbed in mundane matters. These can be tough enough to live with—for example, inflation here has converted the currency into wastepaper. Worthless as the money is, people seem to have loads of it, and spend it freely—the little boutiques along both the Jewish and Arab shopping thoroughfares are thronged, and some of the stony-eyed daughters of Jerusalem, as in biblical times, make a nice spectacle of themselves. And yet, the pressure of unfolding history is felt, of course it is felt, in waking nightmares, in the wary glance at the unexplained parcel. The occasional nightmare of many Jewish and perhaps more than a few Arab Jerusalemites is that autonomy will mean Belfast. There are psychopaths on both sides who would not be sorry to have it so.

ON the night of March 26, the Palestinians in the eastern section of the city also stayed home, signifying that this date is to be marked as one more black day on their calendars. You saw police vans and troops heading into the Arab neighborhoods to forestall demonstrations, and there were no demonstrations. But at almost exactly the moment when Sadat, Carter, and Begin put their signatures to the paper seven thousand miles away, a bomb exploded. Minutes later came another sound that has become and most probably will remain for some time to come typical of Jerusalem: the wail of racing ambulances, counterpoint to the peace process.

Jane Fonda & Other Political Thinkers

Richard Grenier

IN the late summer of 1970 I was riding in a chauffeured limousine in New York with Jane Fonda. Her discovery of the world of radical politics was brand new, her previous enthusiasms, as I recall, having been for things as varied as the Actors' Studio, cooking, and the sybaritic life as conceived by her first husband, the French film director Roger Vadim. Her political awakening had come with great suddenness, rather like a religious conversion, just a few months earlier after a trip to India and Sikkim to visit her socialite friend Hope Cooke, then Sikkim's Gyalmo (queen) and wife of Chogyal Namgyal, since deposed. Now Miss Fonda, whose *maître à penser* of the moment was Mark Lane, was on fire with all the standard radical causes of the time.

She was filled with enthusiasm for Peking, where the Cultural Revolution was in full swing. Although she had never visited China (but her "friends" had told her), she assured me with a kind of emotional marveling—very moved—that there was "no coercion" there. It was a land of peace, humane values, and benevolent persuasion. In the realm of American domestic affairs, she said that a historic turning point was about to be reached in the history of U.S. race relations. Her intimate informants within the Black Panther party (Huey Newton was a demigod) had revealed to her that a Black Panther group about to go

on trial for conspiring to bomb two New York department stores would *not* plead innocence but would take as its defense the pitiless repression American society exercised over blacks, which left them no possible recourse but violence. (The group did no such thing, but pleaded not guilty.)

Although Miss Fonda talked, sporadically, the language of peace, violent images appeared repeatedly in her conversation ("I'd pick up a gun this minute and . . ."). Her flow of speech was singular, interrupted by odd bursts, clusters of unrelated prepositions (and propositions). She asked me what my politics were and when I said "wishy-washy liberal," she took it, with no smile, as a fair appraisal. Unassuming in many ways, appealingly unguarded, she admitted to being a "learner" in politics. People talked to her about Karl Marx but she hadn't read him; what did I advise? I gave her a copy of Isaiah Berlin's book on Marx, for which she thanked me warmly. (I have no idea if she ever read it.)

Over the years I have encountered a number of "revolutionary" artists and intellectuals who I was convinced would turn tail and run at the first whiff of the grape, but this was not my feeling about Jane Fonda. Despite the recentness of her conversion to radicalism, she seemed ready to sacrifice everything for it: career, money, position, respect. (It should be remembered that at this point, 1970, despite the ferment of the 60's, no Hollywood star had ever openly espoused any cause ideologically more radical than Lyndon Johnson's Great Society and lived,

professionally speaking, to tell the tale.) When the limousine pulled to the curb, and Jane Fonda leaped out for a short errand, I asked the uniformed chauffeur what he thought of her politics. "I used to work for her father, a real gentleman," he said. "This one?" He shook his head sourly. "She's going to ruin her career."

Eight years later, in the summer of 1978, I was riding in another limousine in New York with another film star. Suddenly I realized that it was the same chauffeur who had driven me about with Jane Fonda, although his looks had certainly changed. Gone were the cap, the uniform. He now wore a flowered sport shirt, and his hair was longer. "Jane?" he said (the last time it had been "Miss Fonda"). "Sure! It was just before she won the Academy Award for *Kluge*!" Of his prediction that her career would be ruined by her radical politics, he had no recollection.

BECAUSE of course Jane Fonda's politics did not ruin her career at all. By the early 70's, an appreciable portion of the young, affluent segment of the population that had come to dominate the movie audience quite possibly agreed with her views, selectively presented. But, probably more important, a general tolerance had been growing about an entertainer's personal politics. (A clear-cut recent example of this was the voting in 1978 of a major acting award by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, a large portion of whose membership is Jewish and in all likelihood in sympathy with Israel, to a notorious anti-Israel agitator, Vanessa Redgrave.) And even in 1970, Jane Fonda's public political positions quite failed to provoke a storm of public hatred. Indeed, she and a number of other "political" actors have over the last decade not only been able to pursue rewarding careers as movie stars but, more significant, have been successful in presenting their

RICHARD GRENIER, whose review of *The Deer Hunter* appeared in our April issue, is a veteran commentator on movies and the movie business.

political views to the public in an extensive number of large-budget commercial movies.

It is interesting that John Cogley, in his study of the Hollywood blacklisting of the 50's, concluded that despite the lurid tales told the House Un-American Activities Committee by Gary Cooper and Ginger Rogers's mother, no "subversive" material ever got by the autocratic Hollywood studio heads of the period and into American movies. Today, by contrast, without a squeak of protest, millions of dollars of big-studio money regularly go into films so bitterly critical of traditional American values that the moguls of the old Hollywood would have avoided them like leprosy. There are few witticisms in the history of Hollywood that have been quoted more often than that of the mogul who said: "If I want to send a message, I'll use Western Union." Repeated for decades with gleeful philistinism, this is now the most out-of-date epigram in Hollywood, where there's hardly an actor or director who doesn't want to make a "statement" (the present preferred term).

It is worth noting that filmmakers with a political message find feature films a far freer medium to work in than television. According to Mike Gray, maker of *The Murder of Fred Hampton* and originator of *The China Syndrome* project, "The really essential [documentaries] you can't get on TV. The advertisers control the news." But "you can say anything you want in feature films"—provided, as Michael Douglas (who produced and acted in *The China Syndrome*) puts it, "you're into profits." But the oddity of the whole business is that for a producer to convince the institutions which finance movies that his film will be profitable, he has to line up a "bankable" star; and if he has a project for a political movie, the star is unlikely to sign on if he doesn't agree with the film's politics. Which means that the political movies the public is getting from Hollywood today represent, by and large, the political thinking of actors.

IN THE old Hollywood of long-term contracts and sharply demarcated

jobs, directors directed, editors edited, actors acted, writers wrote what they were told to write, and the studio chiefs made all major decisions as to content and everything else. Clark Gable, despite his fame and money, was a hired hand. If a burning idea on the Abraham Lincoln Brigade during the Spanish Civil War had come into his head, he could no more have set it before the American public in a Hollywood movie than a young Detroit automotive engineer could have marketed his own self-designed automobile.

The rise of the new Hollywood system changed all this. In the late 50's, "studios" began confining themselves to bankrolling and distributing films, while leaving the artistic initiative and packaging to independent producers. But when an independent producer brought his package to a studio to seek its financial support, the decisive factor was usually whether he had lined up a major star. Soon many stars became producers themselves.

Overnight the movie business was transformed, with the stars now making the big decisions. If a star said go, a movie was made; if he said no, it was not; if he felt the script needed a rewrite, he got a rewrite. But at the beginning, the stars still felt constrained about using their newly acquired power to influence public affairs. They remembered the days when film actors had been destroyed by political as well as sexual scandals. As the 60's progressed, public attitudes on these matters were changing swiftly, but the old habits of caution lingered on. Then came Jane Fonda. If an entertainer could volubly and profanely take on the President, Congress, the Army, and other sacred institutions of the country and still win an Academy Award, things had clearly changed. After *Klute*, film actors began pouring into the arena of public debate.

OF COURSE, the intellectual and educational level of the Hollywood acting corps has risen immeasurably over the last generation. (I wonder if it ever entirely deserved the low marks given it by F. Scott Fitzgerald when he worked so un-

successfully in Hollywood. He found Errol Flynn "bestially" stupid. But when I met Flynn, in his last years, I found him intelligent, witty, self-deprecating, literate. He read Gibbon; had Fitzgerald?) Today's leading film actors are often children of lawyers, college professors, successful businessmen. Many of them have gone to the country's elite colleges (Jane Fonda, Vassar; Jack Lemmon, Harvard; Paul Newman, Kenyon and Yale; etc.). In matters beyond their particular field of expertise, they tend to be not the mindless narcissists of the stereotype but creditable examples of the "intelligent layman." Nonetheless, they are actors. Henry Kissinger once said he loved actors for their "generosity," their "spontaneity," their "wholeheartedness." He did not mention their political sophistication. To examine actors as political thinkers is not to examine them in their most impressive capacity. But this is exactly what their newly decisive role in determining what political ideas are to be presented in American movies compels us to do.

There is hardly an actor in Hollywood who does not have his political coloration. Clint Eastwood is a "law-and-order" man. Burt Reynolds is an ardent regional advocate: the South. (His girl friend, Sally Field, has just had a triumph in *Norma Rae* as a militant union organizer in a Southern mill town, a role Reynolds urged her to take.) Jack Nicholson was thrown into national prominence by the counterculture (*Easy Rider*), and without his support, the movie version of that counterculture icon, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*—a decade and a half in the birthing—would probably never have been made. Every Hollywood producer has his list of "liberals."

The search for a star for *The China Syndrome* is as good an example as any of the way the game goes. Soon after reading Mike Gray's original screenplay, Michael Douglas—who had made his name producing *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*—sent the script to Robert Redford (in the earlier versions the Jane Fonda character was a man). Redford replied that the project was a "very viable" one,

"probably next to the Karen Silkwood story,* the best in the genre," but that as an actor he was looking for something different. Then Douglas proposed the role to Richard Dreyfuss, who accepted, but subsequently developed "reservations" about Gray and "fell out," for whatever reason, leaving the project dead in the water. Fortunately for the film, Jane Fonda's own production company had just lost out in its attempt to get the rights to the Karen Silkwood story, and she leaped into the *Syndrome* project with gusto, changed the main character to a woman, got rid of Gray as the director, and brought in her own rewrite men. The ship was running before the wind again, with all canvas spread.

A GENERAL, if variegated, picture of the film star as political activist can perhaps be put together by examining four of the most "committed" personages of the American movie world: Robert Redford, Paul Newman, Warren Beatty, and, again, Jane Fonda.

Redford had his finest hour with *All the President's Men*. According to one account I have heard, he was on to Woodward and Bernstein even earlier than the publishers, and the triumph of *All the President's Men* was in part his triumph. (Earlier, he had made *The Candidate*, an interesting skeptical film about American politics.) His reforming ardor still high, Redford went straight from Woodward and Bernstein into *Three Days of the Condor*, his anti-CIA movie. Unlike *All the President's Men*, *Condor* had an entirely invented plot, showing the CIA slaughtering whole offices filled with American citizens, on American soil, because these hapless people had inadvertently come across some CIA secret. But Redford had crossed some shadow line. The film was a failure, possibly because its attack on the CIA went too far to be credible even in an anti-CIA climate. (It was a great success in France, however, where audiences found it thrillingly realistic.) Redford is now finishing *The Electric Horseman*, with Jane Fonda, apparently about the corruption of native American virtue by the de-

based values of modern, commercial society, and we have clearly not heard the last from him as a social critic.

I do not know how Robert Redford now feels about *Three Days of the Condor*, but I know how Paul Newman feels about *WUSA*, his own most extreme venture into political polemic. He now thinks the film, an attack on super-patriotism of the Texas-H.L. Hunt sort, was "over-politicized." "We went off the deep end," he said recently. Newman and Redford share the same problem. They are the spiritual descendants of Gary Cooper and John Wayne: clean, clear-eyed, handsome, seemingly serene, "perfect" American men. The public seems to expect them, like John Wayne, to wear the American flag in their buttonhole (which is, in effect, what Redford was doing even in *All the President's Men*). It might well turn out that moviegoers will only accept them in this role, as some kind of national male ideal, and that whenever they present themselves as left-wing agitators, audiences will have none of it.

According to his reputation, Warren Beatty is a far more calculating individual than either Newman or Redford—shrewd, persistent, manipulative. He is wonderfully effective at getting what he wants. Of the whole crowd out in Hollywood he would seem the most likely to make a go of real politics if he should ever decide to throw his hat into the ring. He has been very active in Democratic party politics, particularly during the presidential campaign of 1972, when he raised millions of dollars for George McGovern. (Paul Newman gave precious support to Ramsay Clark in 1976 in his forlorn bid in New York for the Senate seat won by Daniel P. Moynihan.) Beatty later expressed vague disappointment in the role of fund raiser since "afterward you have no control" (presumably meaning even if your candidate wins). When told he would only really have control if he ran for office himself, he did not rule it out.

Beatty clearly thinks of himself as well within the American political mainstream, and, except for a few anti-Nixon swipes in *Sham-*

poo and his flirtation with the mentality of the assassination buff in *The Parallax View*, he has been rather cagey and has so far not attempted to present his political thinking in his films. But for at least ten years now, he has cherished the idea of doing a movie version of the life of John Reed—the young American radical who in 1919 published a pro-Bolshevik account of the Russian revolution, *Ten Days That Shook the World*—and, as it happens, a hero of Beatty's. Now, with the huge rentals pouring in from *Heaven Can Wait*, Beatty is moving fast on his John Reed film, to be called *Comrades*. With all the upgrading of the intellectual level of film audiences in recent years, it is still doubtful that many moviegoers are conversant with the details of the seizure of power by the Petrograd Soviet, and it will be very interesting to see the version of these events that will be given to U.S. cinema audiences by a popular movie star. Beatty at one time hoped to shoot the film in the USSR, so it can hardly be very anti-Soviet. Does Beatty feel that the Russian revolution is so far back in history, and has so little bearing on present-day issues, that its protagonists can be presented as dramatic figures stripped of ideology—as if they were, say, Julius Caesar? Will his film show too great an approval for the nascent totalitarian regime? Will it all come out romantic adventure? We shall see.

In any event, the conception of the Russian revolution which will soon be propagated to the American public in the compelling medium of the cinema will not be determined by government officials in Washington, or local school boards, teachers, or historians, or even a Hollywood studio chief, but by a movie star.

I CONFESS to finding Jane Fonda the most troubling of all these political movie actors. She now refers to the time in the early 70's when I saw something of her as her "sectarian" period, and for some years has been presenting herself as situated comfortably within the spectrum of

* See Samuel McCracken's article, pp. 32-33.—Ed.

American democratic politics. Her present husband, Tom Hayden, a former leader of SDS and a member of the Chicago Seven, has abetted her in this. With the financial support of his wife, and campaigning under the interesting slogan, "The Radicalism of the 1960's Is Becoming the Common Sense of the 1970's," Hayden finished a not-disreputable second to John Tunney in the last Democratic primary race for a California seat in the U.S. Senate (Tunney losing in the general election to Republican S. I. Hayakawa). There are many who remain unimpressed with this performance—feeling that, after all, big money buys a big vote, and that if ex-movie star Elizabeth Taylor can get her husband elected Senator from Virginia, what is so wonderful about the husband of Jane Fonda, at the height of her fame, coming in second in a California primary? Nonetheless, many thousands of Californians were presumably willing to accept Hayden, and his wife, as politicians operating within the framework of the democratic electoral system.

In the early 70's, however, Jane Fonda was a revolutionary of purest stripe. To the extent to which she thought the matter through, I suppose she would have said that all legal channels to social change having been permanently blocked, "the people" had no choice but to rebel against the American political and social system and replace it with a new order of things. (On the model of China? North Vietnam? North Korea? This was not specified.) If she felt any remorse at the prospective disappearance of any of our traditional civilities, she did not express it. Indeed, my impression was that she craved some kind of social apocalypse.

The American popular and semi-popular press now avers, however, that Jane Fonda has mellowed. In May 1977, *People* magazine had her picture on its cover with the bold-face headline: JANE FONDA: AMERICA LOVES HER AGAIN.

Five months later, *Time* magazine ran a feature piece called: GROWING FONDA OF JANE: THE REBEL HAS MELLOWED. Yet reading through transcripts of hours of interviews she recorded recently, I was interested to notice that she herself specifically denied, in so many words, being "rehabilitated," "mellowed," "assimilated," or any such thing. "Back in the fold?" she said emphatically. "I'm not. And I never will be." These quotes were never published.

As for Miss Fonda's temperamental yearning for peace, benevolence, and liberty, I noted in a transcript the remark: "The church that I relate to most is called the People's Temple . . . [which provides] a sense of what life should be about." A year after she spoke these words, Jonestown was a bloody hecatomb, showing at least what the People's Temple was about.

The irony of all this is that, to date, the political movies made by the great Hollywood stars whose allegiance to democratic institutions can hardly be questioned—Newman and Redford—have so far not had large social impact. The more political their films have been, the less commercially successful. (Even Redford's *All the President's Men* appeared only after Richard Nixon had left the White House and was more in the nature of a celebration than an argument.)

Jane Fonda, however, whose attachment to democratic institutions is much more shadowy, has proved vastly more adroit at exploiting the potential of the cinema for political polemic. In the highly successful *Julia*, she endorsed Lillian Hellman's account of the 30's, in which Communists are not shown as devotees of the regime of Stalin but as heroic "anti-fascists." In *Coming Home*, for which she won another Academy Award, she presented "her" Vietnam war (during which she herself went beyond protest to enthusiastic support of North Viet-

nam). In *The China Syndrome*, a hit of truly massive proportions, she has just delivered a furious attack, not only on nuclear power, but, as she says herself, on "placing the public's interest [in the hands of businessmen] whose primary interest is maximizing their profits."

BUT the most disquieting fact of all is that Jane Fonda's blatant—and continuing—apologias for totalitarian regimes of the harshest sort (she recently described North Vietnamese she met in Hanoi as "angelic"), have in no noticeable way diminished the indulgent public credence extended to her as a vociferous and attended spokesman on "what's good for America." Hours after the news of the Harrisburg emergency, with the famous hydrogen bubble still not absorbed, and President Carter touring the Three Mile Island plant, Jane Fonda and her husband Tom Hayden were receiving eager newsmen in their Santa Monica home, calling stridently for the resignation of Energy Secretary James Schlesinger. "We can never be safe in the hands of utility executives whose financial interests require them to hide the truth from the public!" declared Miss Fonda as reporters scribbled. Jane Fonda, untarnished, speaks. America listens.

The producer of *The China Syndrome*, Michael Douglas, it should be pointed out, was taken aback and markedly annoyed with Jane Fonda for making personal capital out of what might, he thought, turn out to be a national calamity. As for Mike Gray, considered the radical hothead behind the whole project to begin with, he was even critical of *Syndrome's* "too black" portrait of the power-company officials. But as Mike Gray knows perfectly well, without Jane Fonda his movie against nuclear power would never have been made. And if Jane Fonda wants the power-company officials in her movie to be portrayed as evil incarnate, they will be so portrayed.

Heller & Malamud, Then & Now

Pearl K. Bell

WHAT would happen if reviewers of fiction were forced to abide by the blindfold rules of winetasting? If they were not allowed to know who wrote the book, reviewers would not risk being intimidated by the novelist's reputation, and, more important, they would feel less morally compelled to praise a bad novel because they share the political and ideological posture of its author.

In the case of Joseph Heller's third novel, *Good as Gold*,* "blind" reviewing would almost certainly have provoked very different critical opinions. But given the esteem in which his first book, *Catch-22*, has been held since it was published in the 1960's, it is hardly surprising that *Good as Gold* has been hailed as "savage," "honorable," "exuberantly funny," "recklessly wise," and more of the same. Heller's friend Barbara Gelb, beating the drums in the New York *Times Magazine* the week before the novel came out, described his "comic despair" as "an unholy mutation, crossbred from Kafka and Dostoevsky . . . with Lewis Carroll and Evelyn Waugh." Then, a week later, in the *Times Book Review*, Leonard Michaels unearthed even grander antecedents: "At the core of its satirical vision, *Good as Gold* seems to have combined Einstein's theory of relativity with Kafka's agonies." The sentence is worthy of S. J. Perelman, but Michaels was dead serious.

Yet the fact is that *Good as Gold* has none of the redeeming exuberance and vitality of *Catch-22*, whose wartime setting and military routines provided Heller with a controlling framework—an external

reality—that shaped and defined the comic ferocity of his attack on war and its attendant pieties. How desperately Heller requires the restraining hand of actuality became plain in his second novel, *Something Happened*, a monologue of paranoia and self-pity whose 569 pages yielded exactly one memorable sentence: "When I grow up I want to be a little boy."

This unique flash of self-knowledge in Heller's dreary organization man, Bob Slocum, explains much of *Good as Gold*. For Bruce Gold is Heller's version of Jewish infantilism, an opportunist who will suck at any alien teat to get ahead. A third-rate littérateur originally from Coney Island, Gold is a professor of English at Brooklyn College who has written a few "mannered and trite" short stories, some bad poems, and a trunkful of pedestrian book reviews. He is also a collector of advances for books and articles he will never get around to writing. The baby of his enormous family, Gold feels vaguely guilty toward his doting sisters and elder brother, who sacrificed their own ambitions and schooling to put him through Columbia, and whose patience is wearing thin while they wait for little Bruce's star to rise and shine in the intellectual-celebrity firmament. Papa Gold is a tyrant of eighty-two who takes malicious pleasure in abusing all his children, especially his one-time favorite, Bruce. Gold's stepmother is a certifiable loony; his aging sisters are bitchy, weepy, or hysterical; his sad brother is a prosperous businessman who resents Gold's intellectual airs and needles him relentlessly with hotly defended misinformation and garbled quotes.

At the age of forty-eight, trapped

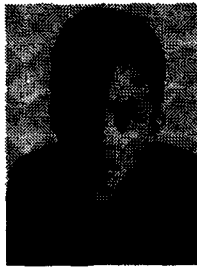
in mediocrity and boredom—with his life, his job, his foul-mouthed children, himself—Gold nonetheless looks feverishly busy, for he is trying to write a book on the Jewish experience in America, which he candidly admits he knows nothing about; a book about Henry Kissinger, the man he most loves to hate; and several high-minded essays in cultural criticism that are all wind-up (snappy titles) and no delivery. Along with all this activity, Gold has to make frequent trips from his apartment on the Upper West Side to Brooklyn, where he frets through interminable, bickering dinners with his awful family while eating everything in sight. (From Heller's succulent accounts of the Gold sisters' *haute cuisine*, it is easy to see that food, particularly the chopped-liver-and-cheesecake variety, is the one thing exempt from his galloping misanthropy. Blintzes arouse this novelist to the sort of incantatory rapture that D. H. Lawrence reserved for Lady Chatterley's rump.)

Good as Gold is Joseph Heller's first bid for a piece of the Jewish action in American fiction, and he has appropriated every moldy cliché of the school of Philip Roth: monstrous parents, spiteful siblings, dumpy wives, vulgar wealth, and unappeasable lust for gorgeous Gentile women. Unlike Roth, though, Heller consistently fails to make us laugh. Every joke lays an egg long past its prime, and he thinks he is uproariously funny when he is cannibalistic and tasteless. Like Gold, Heller does not know what the "Jewish experience in America" is. And it is obvious that he has never taken the trouble, or felt any curiosity, to find out what it means to be Jewish.

Nowhere in his "Jewish" novel is his ignorance more evident than in Heller's exploitation of Yiddish, which he takes to be part blunt instrument, part Minsky joke-book. In a fifteen-page diatribe against

PEARL K. BELL is our regular fiction critic.

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Kissinger, Heller-Gold pours out his wrath in a jumble of basic English and the kind of Broadway Yiddish that Saul Bellow ticks off in *Herzog*, when Valentine Gersbach tells Moses that "You're a *ferimtmter mensch*." *Herzog* winces at the solecism—"Berimtmter"—but Gersbach shrugs it off. "*Fe-be*, who cares." The Yiddish that Heller hurls at Kissinger is of the "*fe-be*" variety: "The lonesome cowboy was *ba-kokt* again, and it was his allies in South Vietnam who would not accept the *tsedreht mishmosh* of a truce he had *ungerpotchkhet*."

Clearly Heller believes these Yinglish salvos to be wit of the highest order. But the prize for *explication de texte* unquestionably belongs to a connoisseur named Jack Beatty, who solemnly informed the readers of the *New Republic* that Heller pimped his diatribe with Yiddish "as if to oppose the simple values of the immigrant generation of Jews to Kissinger's arrogance and opportunism."

But why limit one's satire to the "Jewish experience in America," about which one knows nothing, when one can also make hay with Washington, about which one knows even less? (A Los Angeles *Times* interviewer reported recently that Heller "did not use any real Washington experience in describing . . . the workings of the federal bureaucracy. He has never had any Washington connections. . . . 'I did not want the facts to interfere with the truth.'") Enter the Gentile *ex machina*, one Ralph Newsome, a Columbia pal of Gold's who is now a big shot in the White House. Because Gold had favorably reviewed a presidential memoir, Newsome offers him a chance to throw over his drab New York wife and life for a glamorous job in Washington (even, it is seriously suggested by Heller, as Secretary of State!). But to land the job he must first marry the dazzling daughter of a rich Southern diplomat who guzzles bourbon like Dr. Brown's Celery Tonic and advises his future son-in-law to "not let being a little sheeny inhibit you, you kike." The caricature is so perversely wide of any recognizable mark that it has no sting, one way or the other.

Heller's "truth" about Washington comes down to a feeble gimmick he had already worked to death in *Catch-22*—the oxymoronic sentence that looks like an epigram but has no teeth, such as "This . . . old man reminded Nate-ly of his father because the two were nothing alike." Similarly, Heller "nails" the duplicitous equivocations of Washington bureaucrats through a tiresome reliance on Ralph Newsome's pointless paradoxes: "What we want are independent men of integrity who will agree with all our decisions after we make them," and some hundred retreads of the same limp joke.

That there is a difference between wild invention and satiric exaggeration, that satire must have a foothold in reality, does not seem to trouble Heller. Satire, as the critic David Worcester pointed out long ago, "must practice the art of persuasion and become proficient with the tools of that art," but Heller is unequal to this task. Lacking a real political intelligence, or an adroit satiric imagination, he tries to convey his alleged despair over the conditions of our time by making do with empty rhetoric about "blight, rubbish, rot, and moral defilement." Nothing in *Good as Gold* convinces us that Heller is genuinely engaged with the grave implications of his "jeremiad." Eighteen years after the publication of *Catch-22*, he still wields his free-floating cynicism like a machete. Only the objects of his loathing have changed. But unlike the grim facts of war, Heller's present targets—the Jewish family, Washington politics—demand the kind of complex understanding and moral courage that are beyond his grasp, and they have stubbornly resisted his glib antics and crude literary tricks.

IN SUCH early work of Bernard Malamud as the tales collected in *The Magic Barrel* and the penitential drama of *The Assistant*, the painful, intractable truths of immigrant Jewish life in America exist as a permanent reproach to the younger generation of writers like Roth, and now Heller, who turned that poverty and suffering, even the

Yiddish language itself, into a manic comedy of derision and cultural denial. Malamud rendered the immigrant world with such exactness and honesty that it acquired the fixed quality of fable.

Though Malamud has never stopped writing about Jews (only his first novel, *The Natural*, did without them almost entirely), quite early in his career the defeated grocers and shoemakers were succeeded by characters drawn from his adult life rather than from his Brooklyn childhood: the English teacher Levin in *A New Life*; the art historian and painter in *Pictures of Fidelman*; the novelist Harry Lesser in *The Tenants*; and the biographer in his new novel, *Dubin's Lives*.^{*} All of them grew up in slums, but by the time we meet them they have all, for better and for worse, left their parents' world behind.

In Malamud's earlier novels, what binds Levin and Fidelman and Lesser together like brothers is that they are inextricably enmeshed with their past, which does not "haunt" them in any sentimentally nostalgic sense but is part of what they are and always will be. They long for adventure, foreign places, sexual conquest, but none of these brings about the transformation they crave. In the end, all that questing merely reinforces the burden of the past. Sam Levin, hoping to start afresh in Oregon, discovers "how past-drenched present time was," how much "the new life hangs on an old soul." Though Malamud's novels are rich in whimsical irony and sometimes fly up into thin surrealistic air when they should remain earthbound, the message has been clear: there are no new lives, only new illusions and disappointments.

But now, in his microscopically detailed account of William Dubin, Malamud seems to have gone off in a very different direction. "The biographer," as the novelist keeps referring to him (as though his vocation confers on Dubin a majestic status beyond the ordinary work of an ordinary life), is a fictional kinsman of Levin and Fidelman only in the sense that he was born into a poor Jewish family in Newark: his father was a waiter, and his mother

went mad after a younger son was drowned. Though William Dubin often thinks of his parents and his childhood, in uncomfortable attacks of pity and revulsion, he is not obsessed with his Jewish past, nor does Malamud seem particularly concerned with its relevance to the middle-aged man he scrutinizes with inexhaustible fascination. Dubin's backward glances are dutiful but unenlightening, as

though Malamud were sick of all that festering sadness and suffering, and would much rather concentrate on more interesting matters, like sex.

WE FIRST encounter William Dubin jogging along a country road near his house on the New York-Ver-

^{*} Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 362 pp., \$10.00.

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mont border, and sex is very much on his mind because he is about to embark on a biography of D. H. Lawrence. He has been married for twenty years to Kitty (not Jewish, but this is of little consequence in the novel), has written successful biographies of Whitman, Mark Twain, and Thoreau, and he appears to be in every way a rational and contented man. But when Kitty hires a juicy young dropout,

Fanny Bick, to clean their house, Dubin's placidity is destroyed by the demons of lust and age.

Aroused by Fanny, who is only too willing, Dubin whisks her off to Venice for a week of adulterous bliss that turns into a humiliating fiasco. On his return, clawed by guilt and frustration, Dubin sinks into a winter-long depression that he tries in vain to overcome by mortifying his recalcitrant middle-

aged flesh with diet and exercise. He cannot work, cannot suppress his irritation with Kitty's phobias about cancer and leaking stove-gas, her obsessive recollections of her first husband who died young, cannot get nubile Fanny out of his mind. Comes the spring Fanny miraculously reappears, and they plunge into an ecstatic affair that proves to be as salutary for his book on Lawrence as it is for his masculine self-esteem: "His experience with Fanny, in variety, intensity, excitement heightened by her watchful curious knowing, sureness of her sexual self, willingness to give, couldn't have come at a better moment. He understood Lawrence more fully. . . ." And later: "These visits to Fanny sparked his work. Ideas swarmed in Dubin's mind."

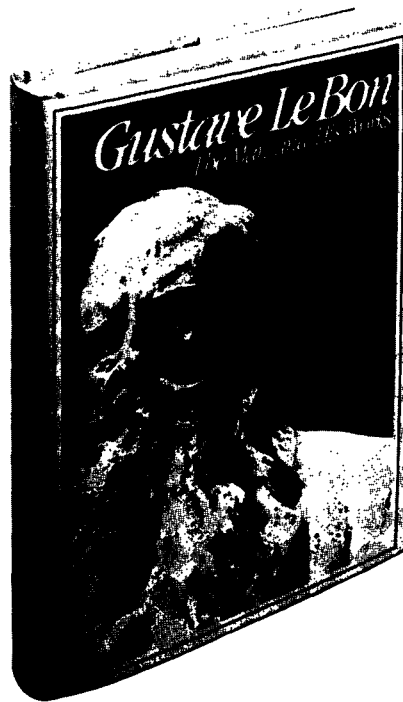
Precisely *what* ideas swarmed, Malamud leaves unsaid, though by this point of the book they could not help being more engrossing than the "youth-renewing" love-making he documents in such starry-eyed detail. When Fanny leaves him at summer's end, Dubin falls into an even more debilitating funk than the last, and he spends another many-paged winter of futility struggling with the goblin of time. Along with his marriage (he becomes impotent with his wife), his memory deteriorates, then his prostate; anxiety murders sleep, and *The Passion of D. H. Lawrence* comes to a dead halt: "He had entered the age of aging. I shall never recover what I have lost. He feared illness, immobility; the disgrace of death." And once again, as winter blows itself out, Fanny, a miniskirted Demeter, predictably comes back to rejuvenate Dubin's withered heart.

By now we can only long for deliverance from Malamud's mechanically turning wheel of seasons, depressions, deaths, and rebirths, the monotonous cycle of jogging, Lawrence, summer, Fanny, winter, aging, impotence, spring, jogging, Lawrence, summer, etc. Malamud tries to engender some excitement by casually throwing in the troubles of Dubin's estranged son and daughter. Gerald, who had deserted from the army and fled to Stockholm, is recruited by the KGB

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and trapped in Russia. Maud becomes pregnant by a lover who is married and black and older than her father. But having offered us this much, Malamud leaves these unfortunates high and dry, and tells us *not one single thing more* about them. Unlike soap opera, there is no next installment and we will never learn what happened to them. The book doesn't end—Malamud has always had trouble with endings—it just stops like a car running out of gas; or like a writer whose weariness with his creatures has become intolerable.

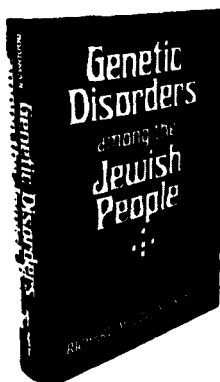
This abrupt cut-off would not seem as much of a cheat as it does if the remorseless accumulation of clinical detail about William Dubin's middle-age crisis had the cumulative weight of pain that Malamud struggles to convey. But

every morsel of Dubin's ecstasy and dejection and terror and joy is belabored with sententious aphorism by an author itching to instruct us in the proper ways to interpret the experience he is relating. Even when Dubin is happily locked in Fanny's arms, he cannot desist from his oracular lecturing. "Life is forever fleeting," he natters to his love, "juggled heartbreakingly by events we can't foresee or control and we are always pitifully vulnerable to what happens next."

The leaden pace of the narrative is hardly quickened by Dubin's constant invocation of Lawrence, who provides yet another source of heavy-handed commentary on marriage, women, sex, and the art of biography. The novel is so overloaded with exegesis that no character but Dubin emerges with any

credible human clarity. Kitty never acquires a face but remains a miscellaneous collection of phobias and anxieties, and Fanny is an erotic fantasy whose attraction to Dubin is merely baffling. While the book is pedantically abundant in minutiae about weather, flowers, trees, clothing, food, all these particulars give us no solid idea of Dubin's and Kitty's and Fanny's life.

In the end, what makes *Dubin's Lives* so exasperating and so boring is the self-absorbed narrowness of Malamud's vision. He writes as if no novelist before him had ever portrayed a middle-aged man, assaulted by the terrors of mortality, seeking to renew his manhood with young and resilient flesh. But it is after all a subject as old and treacherous as time.



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About the author: Richard M. Goodman, M.D., received his training in medical genetics at The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Since 1969 he has lived in Israel, where he is now professor of human genetics at the Chaim Sheba Medical Center, Tel Aviv University Sackler School of Medicine.

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Books in Review

Saving the Day

STRATEGIC OPTIONS FOR THE EARLY EIGHTIES: WHAT CAN BE DONE? Edited by WILLIAM R. VAN CLEAVE and W. SCOTT THOMPSON. *National Strategy Information Center*. 200 pp. \$4.00.

Reviewed by EDWARD N. LUTTWAK

THIS work is a compilation of papers presented at a conference, with some edited extracts of the proceedings. A large pamphlet rather than a proper book, very technical in places and inelegant throughout, it is nevertheless a document of capital importance which marks a new phase of our strategic predicament.

The men associated with the conference, and with the book—M. R. Gustavson, Frank Hoeber, T. K. Jones, Paul Nitze, Patrick Parker, Richard Perle, Gough Reinhardt, William Schneider, W. Scott Thompson, William R. Van Cleave, and Seymour Weiss, among others—have long been known for their warnings of an approaching Soviet superiority in strategic-nuclear weapons. And yet there are no warnings here, for it is now too late for that. What they have long predicted is now actually and visibly taking place. In fact, the debate over the strategic balance, which was in reality a debate over the scope and purposes of the Soviet armament effort in this whole realm, is now over. Even so complacent a document as the administration's current Annual Defense Report admits that the strategic-nuclear balance has shifted in favor of the Soviet Union—a result made quite

certain and enduring by two key decisions of this same administration: the contrived delay in the MX-missile program, and the cancellation of the B-1 bomber. One figure alone reveals in high contrast just how rapid the pace of the Soviet effort now is: over the last year the Soviet Union has added no fewer than 1,000 missile warheads to its arsenal, a number that may be compared to the grand total of 2,154 warheads of the entire American force of land-based missiles.

The conference did not gather to deplore these facts, nor to debate the real-world meaning of the emerging Soviet advantage. For by now it is pretty clear what the consequences of inferiority really are. Obviously a mere imbalance in weapon inventories does not translate immediately into political leverage for the superior power. Scenarios that feature Soviet leaders ordering about an American President on the mere strength of theoretical strategic-nuclear advantages estimated by recondite calculation, are devoid of realism. But at the same time it is evident that the decline of American strength in this area—a decline that is the product of arms-control delusions alone, given our technical superiority and the relative cheapness of the weapons involved—does indeed have consequences: it limits our ability to offer protection to others, so that it undermines the confidence that others place in our security guarantees; it weakens our bargaining position in crises; and generally it diminishes our influence all over the world.

Those who used to argue that the Soviet Union would be content with a symbolic parity have been forced to retreat from that position in the face of facts no longer disputable. Some still try to defend the notion that even a sharp inferiority is of no political significance, but this too is a position no longer widely held. Thus we now have

that most curious phenomenon, self-declared lovers of peace who insist that the Soviet advantage will not matter since we can defeat any threat to our land-based missiles by being ready to launch them on the basis of radar warnings of an impending Soviet attack. Having entered the strategic debate long ago to reduce the great danger of nuclear weapons to mankind, these persons—very well represented in the Carter administration—now propose that we should adopt a firing policy under which the progress of civilized humanity could be terminated on the say-so of a duty sergeant observing fallible radar screens. This, moreover, is superior in their eyes to the alternative: abrogating the 1972 ABM treaty in order to build a force-defense ABM to protect our land-based missiles (a move that would nullify the Soviet investment in large and accurate silo-killing warheads). On the one hand, there is the extreme peril and obvious loss of political power entailed by a rigid "launch-on-warning" stance; on the other, there is the prospect of interrupting the complex bureaucratic processes of arms-control negotiations. The fact that the first alternative is preferred to the second indicates how far mere procedure has prevailed over substance in the conduct of our arms-control policy. And, of course, since arms-control policy has long since usurped our strategic policy, this means that our national policy is now driven by the narrowest procedural requirements of the arms-control profession as well as by the unguided bureaucratic ambition of the armed services.

THIS document offers a way out. Assuming that it is now too late to prevent the emergence of a net Soviet strategic advantage during the early and mid-80's; assuming that the mere passive acceptance of a guaranteed vulnerability is too

EDWARD N. LUTTWAK is research professor at Georgetown University and senior fellow at the Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies. His most recent book is *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire*.

Here are the winners of the 1979 National Book Awards

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University of Tennessee Press

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Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.
Robert Kennedy and His Times
Houghton Mifflin Company

POETRY

James Merrill
Mirabell: Books of Number
Atheneum

CONTEMPORARY THOUGHT

Peter Matthiessen
The Snow Leopard
The Viking Press

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Katherine Paterson
The Great Gilly Hopkins
Thomas Y. Crowell Company

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César Vallejo
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dangerous; and further assuming that the "launch-on-warning" tactic is to be rejected, the authors focus on a number of "quick-fix" force-building solutions to the problem. Among the alternatives discussed are a non-nuclear ABM to protect land-based missiles, the re-basing of bombers, and mobile versions of current missiles. Although these are makeshift measures and thus eventually vulnerable to countermeasures, and although they are certainly not as reliable as one would like, these "quick fixes" can all be implemented in less than three years, and would thus be ready precisely when the "window" of Soviet advantage will otherwise open.

The weapons here presented reveal a remarkable ingenuity and reflect a great deal of hard work—which incidentally went entirely unpaid. The conference was in fact merely the culmination of a year-long, purely voluntary research effort originally launched by two nuclear-weapon experts at the Livermore laboratory, Gough Reinhardt and M. R. Gustavson. They set out in the summer of 1977 to find other experts in the field who shared their sense of urgency, and who were willing to study remedies, working on their own time and at their own expense.

EXPERTS cannot hope to change the political climate which creates the problem of strategic inadequacy in the first place, but they can at least prepare weapon concepts to make them ready for the day when the danger is more widely understood. One day we may look back upon the Reinhardt/Gustavson effort much as we now look back on Britain's Air Defense Committee of the mid-1930's: at a time when the political leadership was unwilling to confront the real threat of Nazi Germany, and preferred to invent a reasonable, non-threatening Germany in its place, a group of scientists and an out-of-office politician named Churchill gathered to do what they could by way of planning and thinking. Out of their modest enterprise there eventually came the air-defense system of 1940, which saved the day, if only by the thinnest of margins.

Mother Love

HAPPY ENDINGS. By MARGARET LOGAN. Houghton-Mifflin. 164 pp. \$7.95.

Reviewed by NAOMI DECTER

ONE byproduct of the women's movement has been the re-evaluation of their mothers by women of raised consciousness. No longer looked upon as merely the purveyors of discipline and clean underwear, mothers have come to be viewed, with rage, as co-conspirators in the male scheme of oppression, or alternatively, with compassion, as fellow victims of that same conspiracy. But the movement is growing up; the daughters of the revolution now have daughters of their own to whom the torch must be passed. Margaret Logan, who teaches English at Boston University, has undertaken to do just that, as well as to examine her own feelings as a mother, on a bicycle trip with her daughter. *Happy Endings* is her account of that "journey of discovery."

As she explains in the opening pages of *Happy Endings*, Miss Logan has something in common with the whooping crane. Like that fast-vanishing breed, whose neglected eggs perish unless removed to the nest of the more nurturing sandhill crane, Miss Logan had entrusted the spiritual care and feeding of her daughter to others: "teachers, playmates, parents, anyone who'll pick up the slack." Yet, generous as they may have been in taking on the child-rearing burden, these human sandhills did not have quite the sort of sensibilities one might wish for one's daughter. Some of them were rather narrow creatures who could not tolerate "ambiguity, uncertainty, challenges to accustomed loyalties." What is more, among sandhills, "snobbery is both common and freely permitted." Imagine Miss Logan's dismay, then, on discovering that her seventeen-year-old daughter showed signs of becoming a true child of her "foster

culture," that she "emulously" craved the sandhill life—BMW's, ocean views—and showed a decided preference for "vanilla boys"—blond, bland, and "ominously rich." Most horrifying of all to Miss Logan was her daughter's admiration for the female sandhill uniform: "The assertive, unyielding cut. Those discreet little A-lines . . . a plumage whose stiff geometry satisfies snobbish requirements but will tempt no lover to strip and ravish her."

DESPERATE measures, clearly, were in order. Nothing—as the best people have always known—broadens the adolescent mind like a continental tour. Miss Logan herself, when in her early thirties, had found Rome, with its "October sunlight brilliant on Bernini's fountains," a profoundly illuminating experience, and it now occurred to her that a European trip in her own company—extended exposure, so to speak, to great art and good example—would be just the thing to open the "kid's" mind to the "ironies and iconoclasms of whooper life." This would entail no small personal sacrifice on Miss Logan's part; for one thing, just being in France was likely to evoke memories of a recent jaunt there with her lover of many years, her main man since the divorce from the "kid's" father. Traveling without "Adam" would be lonely; but then, what's a mother for?

And so, one summer's day, mother and daughter land in Paris to begin a six-week bicycle trip through France, Switzerland, and Italy—final destination, Rome. France is a veritable University of Whooperism. From Versailles to Chartres to the vineyards of Burgundy, with here a judicious quotation from Colette, there a trenchant analysis of the love life of a medieval queen, everywhere an uninhibited response to the thrill of beauty, Miss Logan wastes no didactic opportunity. But her pupil, sadly, is all too often unresponsive. At Chartres, for example, Miss Logan's sensitive rumination on the stained glass ("Their radiance. The mildness of their radiance. A graphic, no, plastic representation of grace and faith.") elicits no more than a

NAOMI DECTER, a new contributor, works at Newsweek and reviews regularly for the American Spectator.

blank-eyed shrug from her benighted child.

RESIST as she might, however, Miss Logan's daughter—whose name is never disclosed in the book—invariably softens to the subtle magic of her surroundings and her guide. By the time they leave France, she has unbent enough to engage in "her first foreign flirtation"—with some decidedly *un-vanilla* boys. Sensing in this development a chance to "procure an evening alone for my own renewal," Miss Logan looks on with bated breath. "They're strangers," she notes, "but that risk seems small compared to the clear and present danger of being sucked dry." When the flirtation fails to develop into anything more serious, Miss Logan observes that her daughter has missed out on one of life's great lessons: "a disquieting truth about pleasure—it is rare, fugitive, and comes in its own time, not according to our cravings."

Switzerland is barren ground for disquieting truths. Even Logan *mère* finds it hard to keep an open mind in that "apotheosis of sandhill," and no passing male stranger offers himself as an alternative educational aid. The Swiss experience is redeemed, finally, only by "the spiritual and recreational clout of the Alps." Miss Logan vows to "hold in my mind the image of her [daughter's] happy sprint up the Simplon [Pass], not her snobbish shortcomings."

These shortcomings rise to the fore during the first few days in the great illuminator, Italy. Sexual assaults, verbal and physical, from roving motorcyclists threaten to negate all the beneficent effects of France and the Alps. Having visualized "elaborately beseeching Italian men who would playfully tease her out of her distressing sandhill prissiness," Miss Logan is unprepared for her daughter's terrified reaction. But things gradually do improve, thanks, in part, to the

helpful roadside beseechers, who expose their penises for the daughter's benefit. Such behavior, Miss Logan reflects, may not speak well for Italian society, but she cannot but applaud the effect on her daughter of "so much exposed cock." "Curiously good. An approximation of what I hoped Italy would do for her." By journey's end, she can declare with joy and relief, "the trip worked, she's corrupted."

What is the precise nature of this corruption, the salvation of seventeen-year-olds? It is not really sexual. Even Italy, in the end, does not persuade the daughter to embark on "life's only adventure reliably worth any price" with a *simpatico* fellow camper. Nor has she been cured of the aspiration to sandhillery. Safely back in the U.S., she continues to insist that "It's the best life I can think of."

But appearances are misleading. A significant, if subtle, transformation has indeed occurred some-

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where along the bikeway. Miss Logan's daughter may not have lost her tolerance for the "good" life, but she *has* lost her intolerance of her mother. And more than she fears the consequences for her child of solid stability, Miss Logan fears her disapproval. Miraculously, that disapproval, freely voiced in Boston and France, has disappeared by Florence. Early attempts to involve the "kid" in her amatory difficulties had yielded Miss Logan a "selfish, bratty response": "I don't want to hear anything about it," or "Don't ask me to meet this new guy. I never want to lay eyes on him. That way I won't mind when you dump him too." By Italy, the revelation that this particular "new guy" is married provokes only a mild remonstrance: "You ought to have your head examined."

CLEARLY, then, Miss Logan has accomplished something by exposing

her daughter to the "corruption" of Europe: by multiplying examples of the "ironies and iconoclasm of whooper life," she has shown that her own life, in its chaos and promiscuity, is not so reprehensible as her daughter has made her feel. And having thereby shown, as well, that *she* is not to be held accountable for her daughter's anxious retreat—past or future—into stuffiness, Miss Logan can hardly be blamed for feeling triumphant. "My daughter," as she puts it, "untangled me from my own mothering. . . . I'm running free in latitudes where I once banged futilely about in irons." Thus freed from the maternal burden, Miss Logan can even accept her daughter's reawakened craving for BMW's and ocean views with an open-minded, "I wish you well. I'm skeptical, but I wish you well."

With mothers like these, who needs social workers?

Anti-Americanism

INNOCENTS OF THE WEST. By JOAN COLEBROOK. Basic Books. 454 pp. \$15.00.

Reviewed by ROGER STARR

FOR some lonely Americans who suffered incommunicado through the impieties of the 60's, *Innocents of the West* is, though belated, as welcome as Friday's footprint on the sands of Crusoe's Island. It offers hard evidence that somewhere in the vicinity there is another creature with five toes, all pointing in the right direction.

The book is a chronicle of Joan Colebrook's purposive wandering during the years 1964 to 1969. Sensing that there was a connection between the anti-American feeling that surfaced at every chic party in Manhattan and—to take one example—the Newark and Detroit riots, she set forth to trace the streams of consciousness that linked them. In no sense, however, is this book a detective story ending in the exposure and confessions of those who forged the links of an articulated conspiracy: Miss Colebrook offers rumors, but no proofs; bits of evidence, but none admissible in a courtroom ruled over by anyone more scrupulous than the conspirators themselves. And yet, long before she completes her travels, it is clear that the crucial ideas floating loose from Boston to Darwin, from San Francisco to Cairo, were given their velocity and weight in Moscow, and that their trajectories were deliberately plotted to advance the geopolitical aims of the Kremlin. Naturally, most of the people who gave these ideas currency thought themselves responding only to the moral urgencies of the time. They were the "innocents" of Miss Colebrook's title.

Miss Colebrook's travels began in Boston, where, working on an earlier book, she penetrated the black demimonde with its white fringes. Planes took her to California, buses to Mexico, both the

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rural and the urban country, brilliantly evoked in her writing. Then back to Boston and the Northeast; to Australia, her native land; to New York; to England, Egypt, France. While traversing this geographical sweep, she covers a similar expanse of time and history. The Mexico she visits is not only contemporary; it is also the Mexico of the late 30's and early 40's, the country of Trotsky's exile and assassination. Trotsky's death haunts her imagination as the remembered foreshadowing of what she sees and hears about her. It was the absurd innocence of a young woman follower that made him vulnerable in the end to the plotting of Stalin. A social worker from Brooklyn, courted by and bedded with a disguised Spanish GPU agent who palmed himself off as a clumsy would-be convert to Trotskyism, she opened the door all innocently to her lover so that he could bury his alpine pick in the brain of the exile she herself revered.

As Miss Colebrook leaves Mexico for the North, she picks up the threads of this now mythic story, finding them hanging on people's clothes and costumes twenty-five years later. Thus, a black Boston prostitute tells Miss Colebrook, her devoted friend, that whites are to die a fiery death. "We are living in the doom of the white man's world," she says. "The U.S. government is active in its deceitful work." In Cambridge, at the endless faculty-connected cocktail parties, she hears "an expressed dissatisfaction with U.S. life and the U.S. role in the world." In Australia, she finds the propaganda about Vietnam goes something like this: "It is really a U.S. war." "An imperialistic war." "Australia has been dragged in by the U.S.A." In England, she hears: "We are black, we are comely, and they—they are white—they are the dust of creation." And in Paris:

But we are not against the *blacks*. We are only against the *Americans*. We especially like the Black Panthers.

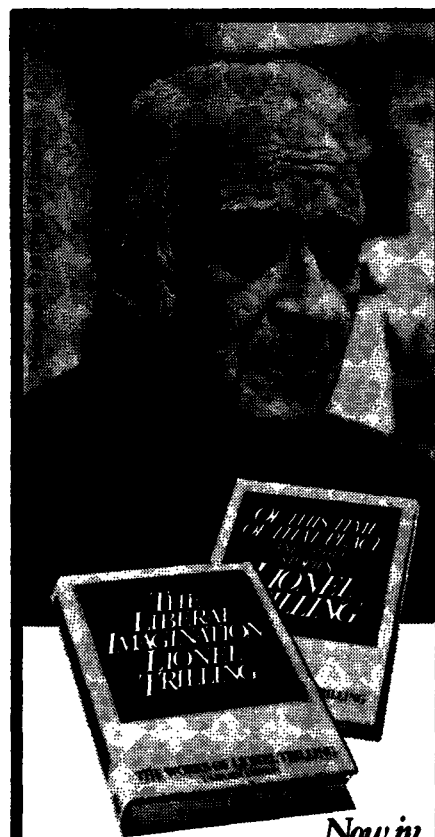
Because they are *most* against the Americans?

Yes. Because they are *most* against.

Almost without end, Miss Colebrook hears, in snatches of dialogue, the essential phrases of the period, echoing in the student meetings of New York and in the homes of venerable leaders of the Old Left from Waldo Frank to Cedric Belfrage; from a California artists' colony to apartments on the smart East Side; from the vast garbage dumps of Mexico City to the perilous north coast of Australia, bombed and nearly invaded by the Japanese in World War II, and now strangely indifferent to the menace of a new totalitarianism in China.

THE heard fragments, illuminated by the comments of a few serious students of history who have somehow escaped the hysteria around them, fit together into a simple doctrine. Its beneficiary is clearly the Soviet Union, so clearly that it seems vapid to suggest that unconnected people all over the world were responding all at once, without prompting, to the allegedly patent horrors of American life. From the babble of voices, and the words published in magazines like *Ramparts* (funded, she alleges, by Czechoslovakian money), the themes echo over and over the apparent directives of a Moscow propaganda bureau: weaken the United States by radicalizing a significant part of the black population and making potential white leadership supremely uneasy over its guilt and the world's hatred. Provoke anti-Semitism, and focus attention on Israel's imperialism. Identify the United States as the power that moves Israel to its bidding. Impugn America's liberties by calling the country "Amerika." Suggest to Americans that this is the time for them to expand their consciousness. Provide the drugs to make this possible. Obscure reality with political sloganeering. Attack fundamental personal relations by denouncing manners and courtesies in the pursuit of abstract social goals.

Assembling these fragments of doctrine, Miss Colebrook makes a powerful case for anyone who remembers the reluctance of the nation to measure the Hitler menace in the late 30's and the narrow



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margin that kept the army from being disbanded in 1941. At that time, a similar propaganda barrage, falling on similar fears and similar grievances, was remarkably effective. In both periods, the purposes were identical: to impair the will of the United States so that the objectives of its enemies' foreign policy could be achieved with minimal risk. The primary objective in the 60's was to clear Southeast Asia of American influence, but even more important, to persuade Americans to apply the "lessons" of Vietnam to moderating the U.S. grasp on its Middle Eastern strategic position and the oil fields.

WHAT might be unconvincing as strategic speculation by Miss Colebrook is made concrete by the pre-

cision of her observations of the world she sees imperiled. Here, for example, is a slice of Queensland, observed from an Australian train:

At Mackay the smell of sugar in the air, mingling with the salt blown from the sea. Some of the passengers board the train carrying suitcases tied up with rope. The figures of aborigines and half-castes glow in the fading light, dressed in reds, oranges, purples. Two men who might have come from New Guinea stroll the platform holding cups of tea, their thick, tight-curved hair making halos around strong-featured faces. A white woman descends from one of the carriages to buy a newspaper. She wears a pale blue dressing gown, and her head is covered with pink plastic curlers. . . . From the train again

the shining lavender blossoms of the canefields are seen, spirit flowers receding in the fast-dropping twilight.

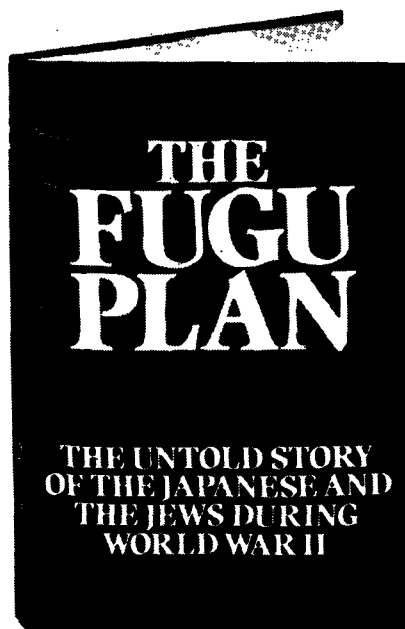
The secret of Miss Colebrook's effectiveness is the intensity of her love for the world she knows, its concreteness, particularity, and color. The fear that animates her is that this world will be lost, its varieties crushed by nihilists pursuing power, people incapable of attachment to its variety, their minds dazzled by the prospect of hatred unleashed under the excuse of "social justice."

To some, these hypotheses may seem the product of a fevered imagination. But Miss Colebrook has heard the words, and remembers the awful price past innocence has paid.

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Survivor Syndrome

CHILDREN OF THE HOLOCAUST. By HELEN EPSTEIN. Putnam. 398 pp. \$10.95.

Reviewed by SONIA TAITZ

FROM its title, Helen Epstein's *Children of the Holocaust* would seem to be another book about the "war against the Jews." The title is ambiguous, however, and conceals the uniqueness of Miss Epstein's topic. It is not the Holocaust generation with whom she deals, but the succeeding one; the children are not those of the Holocaust, but of Holocaust survivors. This group was represented in a special issue of *Response* magazine (Spring 1975) which opened with Toby Mostysser's eloquent "Reminiscences of a Survivor's Child" and included a symposium in which the children of survivors spoke of their experiences and emotions. By 1977, small groups of survivors' children had begun to sound out their personal histories in the U.S., Canada, and Israel; psychiatrists in these countries began to receive funds to investigate the "survivor syndrome" at one remove.

Children of the Holocaust is an expansion of a 1977 article by Miss Epstein, in which both personal histories and psychiatric studies were for the first time brought together. Her necessarily brief report and its understanding tone—the author herself is a "child of the Holocaust"—succeeded in conveying Miss Epstein's own sense of discovery. Unfortunately, she continues to rely too much on this tone: after two years of further research, the paucity of persuasive documentation and stringent thinking has become apparent. The psychiatric studies are still rudimentary, and make claims to neither reliability nor validity. The interviews are more extensive and varied, but there are no controls to their extent or variety. Miss Epstein's once hesitant tone, indeed,

now comes across as a fanfare of melancholy; it arouses expectations and invites disappointment.

There is first of all the question of whether the children of Holocaust survivors do in fact constitute a group in any meaningful sense. Miss Epstein confesses:

We had grown up during the 60's at a time of great psychological awareness, when group after

group became involved in examining concerns that were more than individual problems. We watched women, blacks, homosexuals, ethnics, even *block associations* organize, brainstorm, and air vital issues. Some of us joined other groups but did not, at first, form our own.

The intimate tone seems to hint of a dawning collective conscious-

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SONIA TAITZ, a new contributor, recently completed graduate studies in literature at Oxford. She lives in New York and is working on a novel.

ness. Of its nature, however, we learn very little. Unlike the other groups she names, Miss Epstein's lacks either physical or geographical coherence. It seeks no political, social, or religious rights. Instead, it seems to insist upon the "right" to amorphous sympathy for a second-hand pathology whose existence is never adequately proved. Given the fact that the Holocaust left deep psychological scars on all its survivors (which nevertheless in most cases did not prevent their subsequent acculturation and economic improvement, as reliable studies have noted), there is also Darwin's *caveat* that acquired characteristics cannot be inherited. Of course, traumatized parents may breed traumatized children; Darwin did not classify psychological characteristics. But neither, at bottom, does this book, which too often attempts to transmit a borrowed sense of martyrdom in an atmosphere of newfound camaraderie.

That having been said, the surer passages of *Children of the Holocaust* deserve notice. Despite Miss Epstein's tendency to vacillate in presentation between the "hard" psychological data and the personal anecdotes (of which her own are far and away the most affecting), there are clear and compelling instances of each. For example, somewhere within her vast assortment of material Miss Epstein cites a study by Dr. Bernard Trossman of Canada who found four recurrent traits in a subject group of university students seeking help: phobias due to parental "smothering"; depression due to "relentless" exposure to parental terrors; active rebellion against xenophobic parental attitudes to the Gentile world; and, "perhaps the most deleterious attitude" of all, "the spoken or unspoken communication that this child must provide meaning for the parents' empty lives. . . . Thus the expectations of the child are enormous. He is treated not as an in-

dividual but as a heavily invested symbol of the New World. . . ."

This last corroborates the finding of another Canadian researcher, Dr. Vivian Rakoff, although Miss Epstein does not point out the synchrony. Dr. Rakoff is articulate, and could well have served as a bridge between the "scientific" and narrative portions of the book:

A life that is not simply a "given" but an almost unexpected gift, may seem to be not a life to be lived, but a mission. It is almost as if the parents, in an attempt to justify their survival, demanded qualities of the children which were the accumulation of their expectations of all the dead who were murdered. . . .

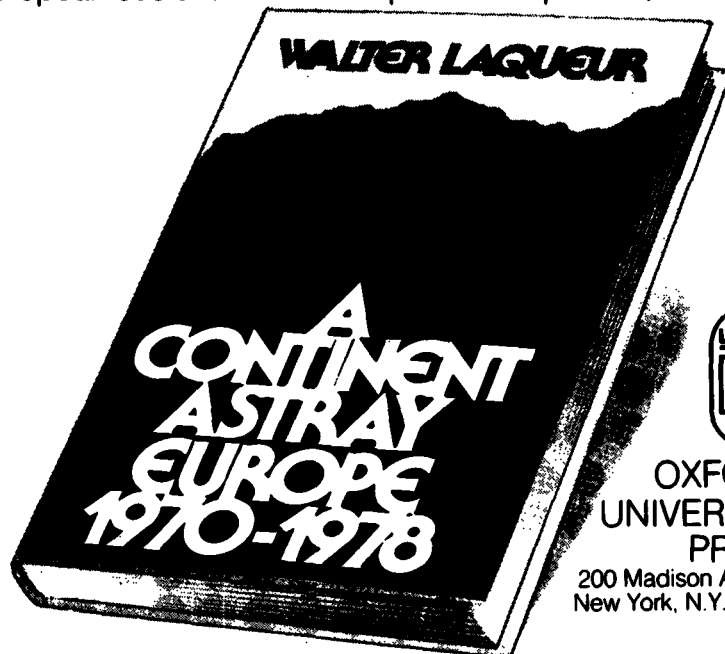
"Not a life to be lived but a mission," since it distinguishes the parents' torment in the Old World from the child's burden in the New, is perhaps the most powerful phrase in the book. To survive the Holocaust means simply to live; for the next generation the burden is to do more, to survive truly, to "overlive"—shouldering the weight of former lives together with one's own.

THE frequent naming of Holocaust survivors' children after those who perished is noted by Miss Epstein as a shorthand method of attaching new lives to old, with stories of the dead lending "magical significance" to catalyze the process. One interview, in particular, illustrates what Dr. Rakoff may have meant by "mission." A young man who carries the names of two murdered grandfathers says that "their name enables something to live on in me." This something fairly breathes in an account of the young man's "pilgrimage" to Hungary, "to stand in the place where all the lost people I never knew had lived":

I said I was the son of Bela Rubinstein, who used to live there before the war. They were all very excited about that but seemed a bit nervous as well. Some of them were afraid that I had come to reclaim my father's house and flour mill—which had long been nationalized anyway. I felt very, very uncomfortable.

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It was one of the lousiest feelings I had ever had in my life. It was as if I were a phoenix risen from the ashes and that I should not be there: I should be dead.

This is intrinsically strong stuff, but against it should be contrasted a hyperbolic tendency in some of the psychiatric investigations, for instance that of a New York analyst who excitedly connects one patient's odd way of "starving himself, hiding in the woods" and arriving for treatment "emaciated and hollow-eyed like a Musulman in a concentration camp" with the "stare of survivors from persecution." Not irrelevantly, the doctor takes note that this patient treats *her* as the "hostile persecutor." The less successful personal narratives, for their part, have a tendency to ramble and are inadequately shaped by comments of the "he took another drag on his cigarette" and the "she took another drag on her cigarette" variety. Both interviewer and interviewee are

often unable to determine how much is relevant to the Holocaust, even at one remove, and how much to the sheer relief of sharing inchoate discomforts with a sympathetic stranger.

At the end of Miss Epstein's 1977 article, she wrote:

It has been very difficult for me to finish this article. For weeks, I have been surrounded by a community whose kinship is plainly evidenced in the piles of transcripts on my desk. I do not want to put them away in a drawer.

This is the sort of heartfelt quality which is both the strength and weakness of *Children of the Holocaust*. Some readers will want to share uncritically in the doting attitude. Others may feel cheated, perhaps survivors' children more than most. To be classified, after all, is to fulfill a demand. Classification is taxonomy, and as cold;

there is something mechanical, something meager, in discovering that the children of Holocaust survivors are only a subspecies of the Jewish family, Holocaust genus, and survivor species. This is especially the case when so few other neat conclusions can be drawn.

The Other Russia

HEAVY SANDS (*Tiazhelyi Pesok*). By ANATOLY RYBAKOV. *Oktyabr* (Moscow), July, August, September 1978.

Reviewed by WALTER LAQUEUR

I FIRST came across the name of Anatoly Rybakov in 1950 when I read his novel, *The Drivers* (*Voditeli*). This, a product of the late

WALTER LAQUEUR, a contributing editor of COMMENTARY, is chairman of the Research Council of Georgetown University's Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C.

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Stalinist era, was a boring description of the life and work of a group of truck drivers, a typical "production novel" dealing with the eternal triangle (girl loves boy loves tractor) of which at the time there were a great many. The author was awarded the Stalin prize for this novel, though in later years the critics had some harsh things to say about it. Rybakov subsequently published stories for children and some other books which I have not read; he does not figure prominently in the annals of Soviet literature of the last three decades. I do remember, however, one of his novels published some years ago in which he says, commenting about the Stalin era, that there are no evil times, only evil people.

Last year, without any forewarning, the literary magazine *Oktyabr* published Rybakov's new novel, *Heavy Sands*, in three installments, and it almost immediately, and rightly, caused a sensation. A sum-

mary of the plot will help to show why.

The novel takes place in a little town north and east of Chernigov, where Byelorussia and the Ukraine meet. The story opens in 1909. Professor Ivanovski, one of Europe's leading surgeons, who now makes his home in Switzerland, is returning on a sentimental journey to his hometown, together with his youngest son, Jacob. Soon Jacob meets and falls in love with a very pretty local Jewish girl named Rachel Rahlenko. Ivanovski, a Jew who has converted to Protestantism and is married to a non-Jewish woman of Swiss-Lutheran origin, is none too happy that his son wants to marry a poor small-town Jewish girl, and unhappier still that Jacob has decided to settle in darkest Russia, but at last he gives his consent. Though neither of the two young people happens to be a religious believer, Rachel has suggested to her fiancé that since she is Jewish

and he at least a half-Jew, he might as well return to the religion of his ancestors.

So far the story is quite far-fetched—and not only because Jews are not usually called Ivanovski. Few, if any, once having left Czarist Russia, would have gone back on a sentimental journey, and no one in his right mind would have decided to settle there even had he received permission to do so. Still, the reader who makes an effort to overcome his initial doubts will be rewarded, for what follows is a fairly realistic and considerably detailed description of Jewish life in pre-revolutionary Russia. Such accounts have been nonexistent in Russian literature for many years.

The little town portrayed in *Heavy Sands* is quite unlike the *shtetl* of Sholem Aleichem. The Rahlenkos are not just a family but a clan, with countless brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, in-laws, nephews, and nieces. They are not *Luftmenschen* but artisans, self-sufficient, proud, neither rich nor impoverished. Avram, the head of the family, is of uncommon physical strength and a man of iron character. He is the *gabbai* of the local synagogue, although not an Orthodox Jew; "religion for him was the expression of his national existence."

The local Jews live in peace with their Russian, Byelorussian, and Ukrainian neighbors. Even when war breaks out, and in its wake revolution and civil war, there are no major upheavals. In fact, surprisingly little changes in the life of our heroes when the Bolsheviks come to power, except perhaps that the Rahlenkos, most of whom are cobblers, now go to work in the new local shoe factory. One uncle, Misha, becomes a hero in the civil war, but after a meteoric career he is demoted for having shown mercy to some local people who were to be executed for a minor transgression, and whose sentence is commuted following his intervention: "He was not clever but open-hearted, like the time in which he lived." Most of the Rahlenkos are not involved in politics; they are just ordinary law-abiding Soviet citizens, deeply rooted in their native soil, and good patriots.

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emerged only
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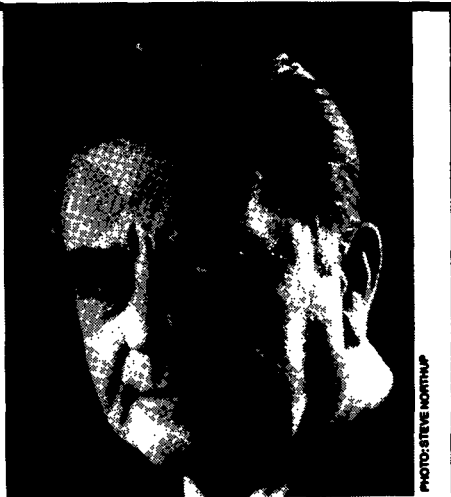


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Living conditions in town gradually improve, the family continues to be the center of all the large and small sorrows and joys. In the early days of the great Stalinist purge of the 30's, Jacob is arrested, but the family finds an excellent lawyer who, after some eighteen months, gets him out of prison. (In most such cases, in real life, the presence of a lawyer—if indeed allowed at all—would not have made the slightest difference.) Then war breaks out again, and Jacob and Rachel's son Boris—who is the book's narrator—joins the artillery; later he is transferred to a front-line intelligence unit.

As for the rest of the family, who stay behind, they along with the other 6,000 Jews in town are rounded up by the invading German forces and moved into the ghetto. Rachel's brother Joseph, the black sheep of the family, is appointed head of the *Judenrat* and behaves very badly indeed. The Jews are

made to work for the Germans under inhuman conditions; they are starved and humiliated, but at first there are only sporadic cases of willful murder and the news about mass extermination is not widely known. The few traitors in the ghetto are liquidated by the Rahlenkos and their friends who, realizing that it was a fatal mistake to have stayed behind, now engage in resistance, each in a different way. Jacob, for instance, helps to plan a major partisan raid which causes great damage. When the Germans threaten to execute 100 hostages in retaliation, he voluntarily surrenders to save the others; he dies under torture.

Eventually a general insurrection takes place in the ghetto; most perish in the uprising, but 400 escape, making their way to the forest and safety. Rachel stays with those gradually falling behind, encouraging them to make a last decisive effort. And then, having accomplished

her last mission, she disappears, as it were into thin air. For long afterward local people will speak in awe of this miracle.

In the final scene of the book, which takes place many years later, Boris and a former partisan commander named Sidorov visit the neglected local graveyard. Over the mass grave they find a tablet which reads in Russian: "To the Eternal Memory of the Victims of the Fascist German Occupiers," and in Hebrew: *Venikoisi, domom lo nikoisi* ("I will cleanse their blood that I have not yet cleansed." This is from the morning prayer on the Sabbath preceding Pentecost and the Ninth of Av—there are no such memorial tablets in Hebrew letters in the Ukraine). Sidorov asks Boris whether the Russian text has been faithfully translated. Whatever Hebrew Boris knew in his childhood he has forgotten, but "out of unknown and eternal depths of memory" he remembers the letters

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and the words and replies, "Yes, everything has been quite correctly rendered."

RYBAKOV's novel is not impressive from a literary point of view. Characters are either heroes or villains, there are no shadings, everything is either black or white. *Heavy Sands*, however, will not be read for its literary accomplishments but rather for the detailed description it offers—the first published in the Soviet Union since 1948—of the last days of many Russian Jews.* The topic has been taboo for many reasons. It was not to be mentioned that Jews were singled out for extermination by the Nazis, or that the Nazis had much local help in the process. On the other hand, word of mouth had it that the Jews were killed because they were too cowardly to offer resistance. Rybakov takes issue with those who believe this—"scoundrels or idiots or people who have never been in battle." He points out that most of those in the ghettos were either elderly people or very young or ill, since all men of military age were serving in the army. And he also notes the fact that hundreds of thousands of young and strong Soviet prisoners of war were also killed in the camps and did not resist—for what could they have done? But this is only part of Rybakov's answer, for more Jews could have been saved if there had been help from the local populace. Of the "good neighbors," Rybakov says, not a few betrayed the Jews, either because they coveted their houses and property or because they were simply scoundrels. The local police were equal in sadism to the SS.

And what about the partisans? In the area north of Chernigov was

one of the biggest partisan concentrations from early in the war. True, in 1942 the partisans were still on the run, and their main task was to attack the Germans, not to help the persecuted civilian population. But some Jews did make their way into the forest in order to join the partisans. The story of the welcome given them is not a pretty one. Some were accepted, but many were not, and a few were even killed. Rybakov has to be exceedingly careful in dealing with this painful topic. The partisan commander who makes an appearance in the novel, Sidorov, is sympathetic, and considers a scheme to help the Jews despite the difficulties involved, but he cannot devote many resources to their rescue and little comes of it. There were, indeed, some partisan units that extended help, but the issue is virtually never discussed in the enormous literature about the partisan movements published in the last thirty years—it is still considered too hot to handle.

After the war, Boris marries a non-Jew; their three sons, however, register as Jews. Why? "Because they honor me? No, I do not think so. . . . They honor their mother not less. But, you understand, the son of a Georgian and a Russian mother usually says he is a Georgian, the son of an Uzbek registers as an Uzbek. You know, the husband does not take the name of his wife, but the wife adopts the husband's name, and also the children. I think my children acted correctly." The logic of the argument is not quite convincing. Boris says on many occasions that Russia is the country he loves, he has no other, he knows no language other than Russian, all his roots are in the country. The same would be true,

a fortiori, for the next generation. But 1978 is not 1928, and however ardently the Ivanovskis may love their native country and its leaders, this does not and will not make them Russians. This is another painful topic, on which Rybakov can comment only by implication.

PUBLISHED in any other country, *Heavy Sands* would have hardly been noticed; in the Soviet Union it is a sensation, and also a riddle. In his earlier books Rybakov had nothing but praise for the wonderful generation of the revolution which grew up under Stalin in the period of the first Five-Year Plans and which reached maturity in World War II. What made him, toward the end of his literary career, write a book in so different a vein? And what prompted the authorities to permit the publication of a novel which, however cautiously, offends against so many canons? Almost simultaneously two other books appeared, the first opening with the statement that "Money is the Jew's god," the other making it known that Judaism has transformed itself into the ideological instrument of expansionism, militarism, racism, and imperialism. To paraphrase Lenin, there have always been two Russias, the Russia of the Black Hundreds and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, of Stalin and his latter-day disciples, and another Russia, idealistic and humanistic. While the flame of the second Russia is not now burning brightly, it has apparently not been extinguished altogether.

*The only exception known to me is a not very sympathetic novel published by a non-Jewish Byelorussian writer in 1963, at the height of Khrushchev's thaw.

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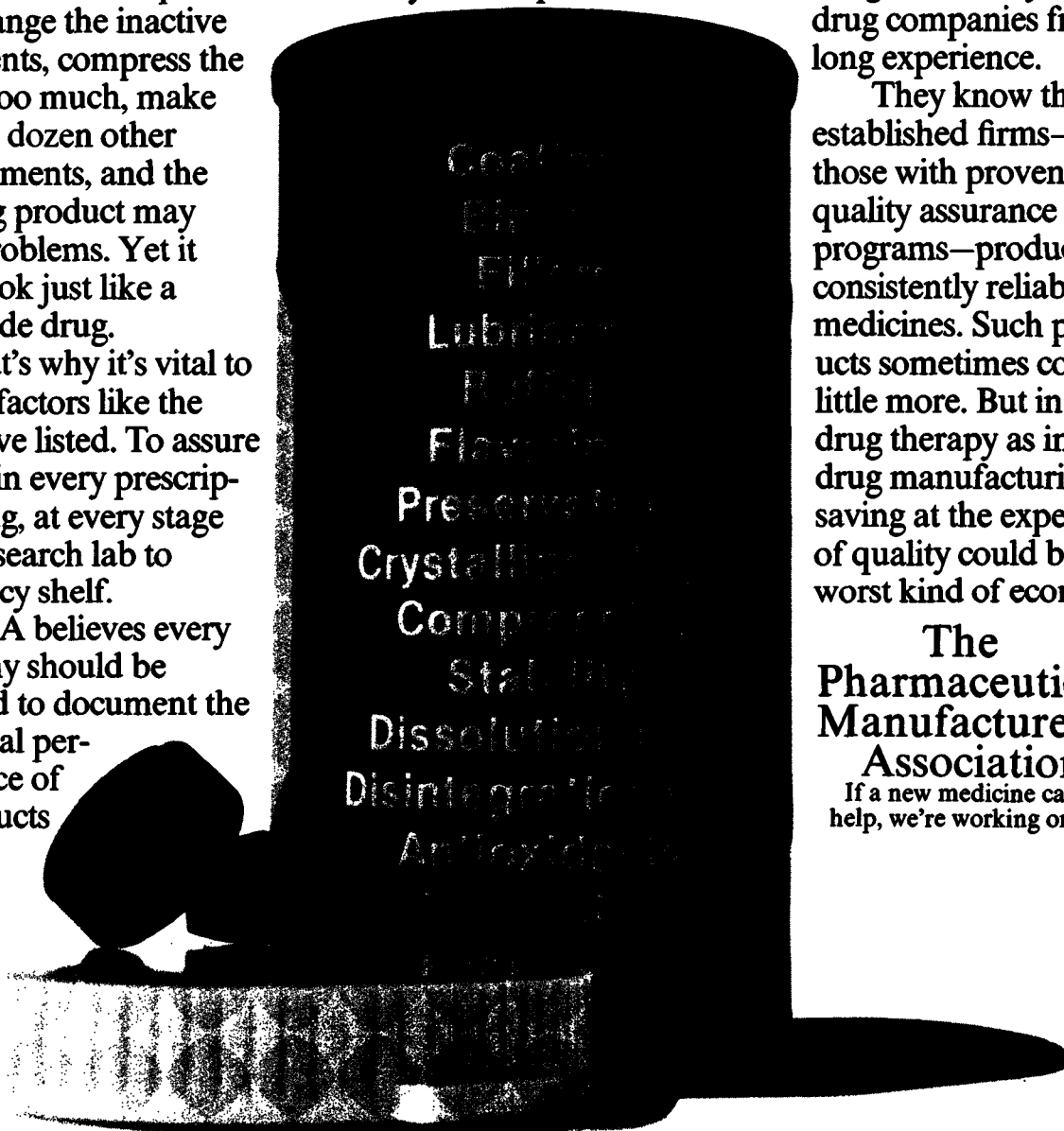
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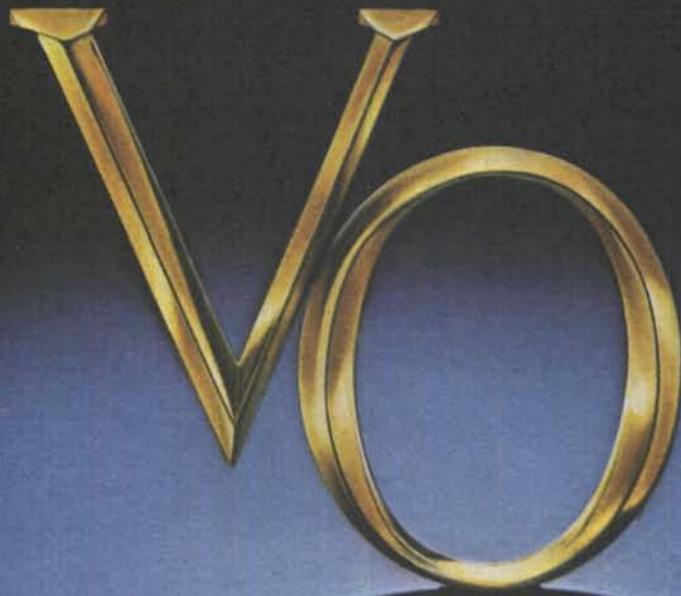
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